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THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT



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It Was Apparent That He Had Come to Stay.

THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT

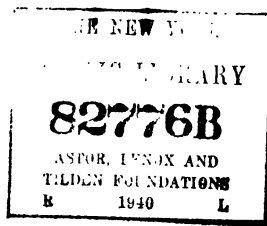
BY
STEPHEN CHALMERS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. T. DUNN,
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FOREWORD

*When the mists lie low and the sun slants up,
And the east is an aureate lip;
When the road lies free to the morning cup,
And the air has a frosty nip;
When the steed champs foam with its nostrils wide,
For the master's mettle rife,
And a gay song fits to the strong, long stride—
There are still some things in life!*

*When the pool lies still, or the current slides
Like oil 'round the far-flung line;
When the tarpon deep in the blackness glides
And nibbles the live-bait mine;
When the reel says "crrrrk" and the wrist feels jar,
And the first leap marks the strife,
As the play begins and the foam flies—
Ah!
There are still some things in life!*

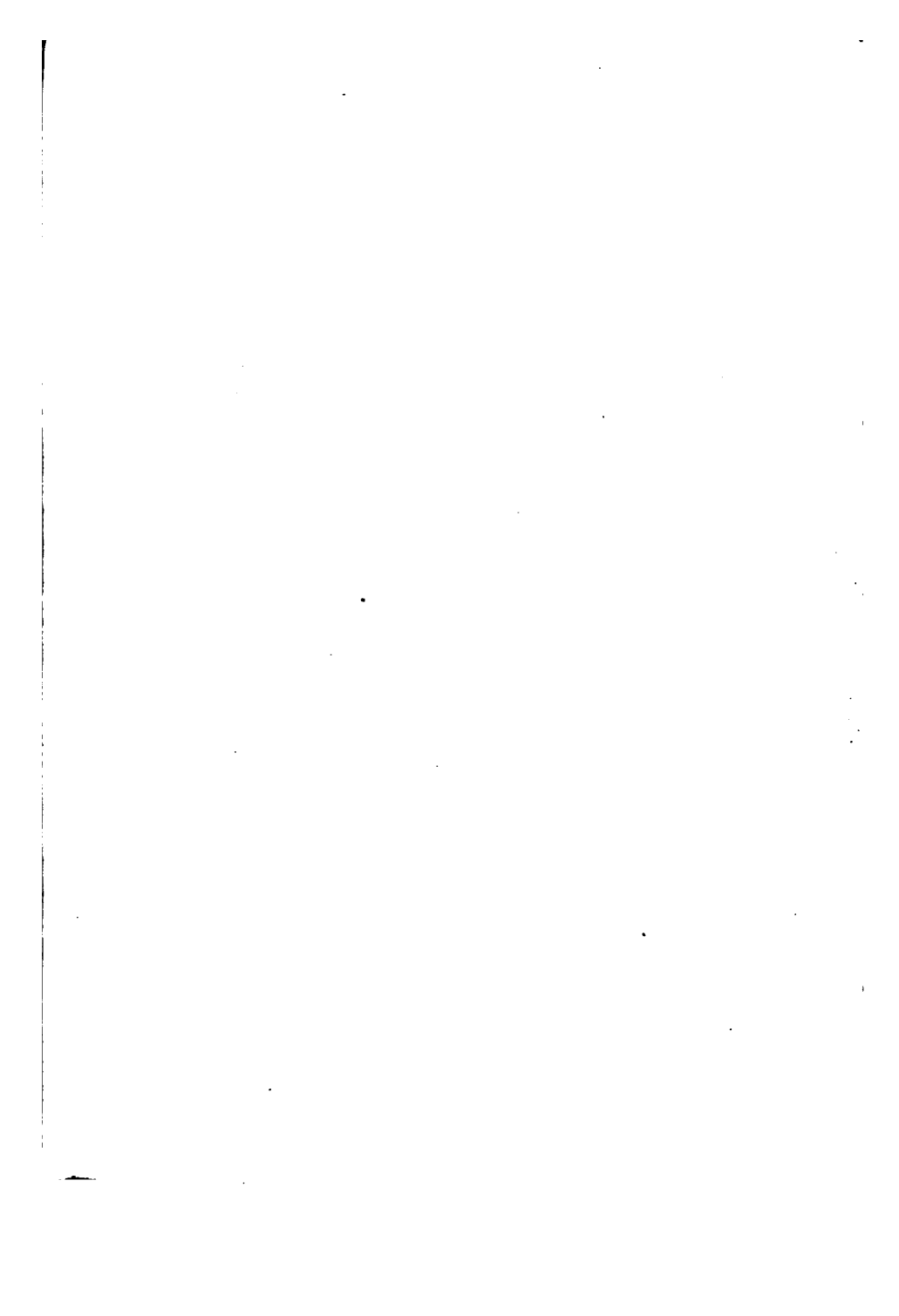
FOREWORD

*When the great moose sniffs by the water's edge,
And starts with an angry snort;
When the hunter crawls through the rustling
sedge,
And the heart beats thick and short;
When the finger crooks on the trigger's curve;
When the eye cuts like a knife,
And the rifle cracks with a vicious verve—
There are still some things in life!*

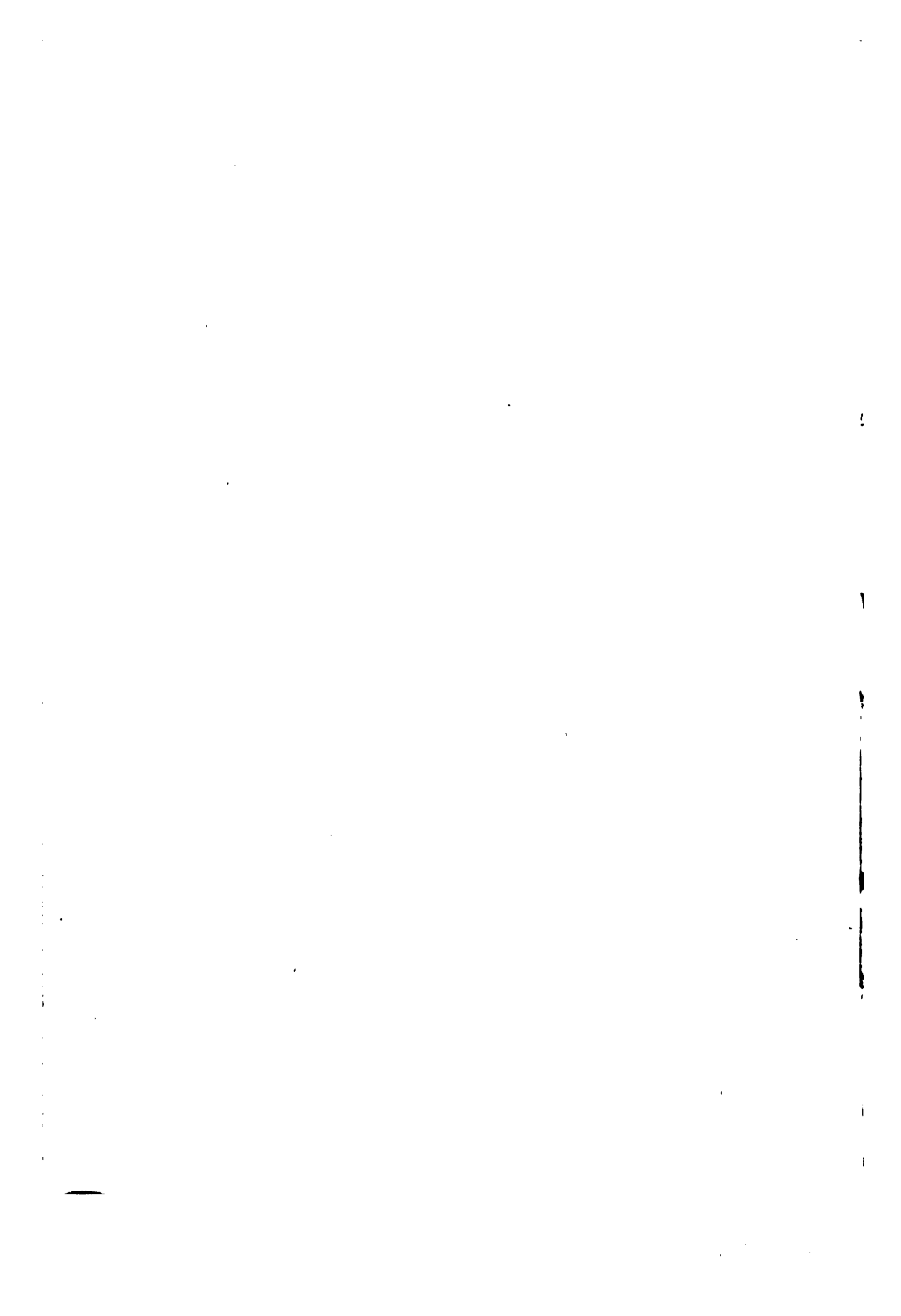
*When the dinner's o'er and the pipe burns free,
And the dog curls by the chair;
When your trail is good (as it ought to be)
And the light glints on Her hair;
When the drowsy thoughts of the past come back,
And you smile, "That's she—my wife!"
When you're quite prepared for the morrow's
track—
There's a lot of good in life!*

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TENDERFOOT GOES A-HUNTING



THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT

TENDERFOOT GOES A-HUNTING

I

THE TENDERFOOT

IT is one of the absolute conditions of human life and achievement that we begin somewhere with a very scant knowledge of the business of living—how to walk, how to eat, how to spell, how to “sass back,” and how to hold our own. Even in the matter of that primordial business, hunting, a human being has to be a tenderfoot, more or less, at some stage of the game. The mighty Nimrod probably was a tenderfoot in his earlier days. Even Theodore Roosevelt may have been one.

THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT

Once upon a time there was a particular Tenderfoot; hence this story. The condition of being an amateur has its compensations—the bliss of ignorance, mainly; otherwise the writer might be ashamed to confess that the particular Tenderfoot was about his own size, age, and color of eyes and hair. But that was a long time ago and to-day he landed a nine-pound pollock on a fly-rod in the Bay of Fundy. (Incidentally the rod snapped, which would indicate that in the game of Rod-and-Gun a man never quite ceases to be a tenderfoot.)

But to come to the story. This particular Tenderfoot woke up one morning with a primeval fire in his blood. It was a September morning in New York City. For months the Tenderfoot had been stewing in a very unprimitive office building and rebellion had accumulated to the revolting point. On this September morning there was russet and gold among the park trees; the air had the tasty taint of autumn woods, with a vague suggestion of haze on still waters, and—and a picture on a railroad



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folder of a bull moose nosing the wind by a pine-shadowed lake did the rest.

"I'm going a-hunting!" said the Tenderfoot, none the less emphatically, because the ejaculation was mental.

Thereafter, the days between the making of his decision and the taking of his vacation were in the nature of a prolonged excited reverie (a queer condition, you will allow, but quite a common one). At intervals he unbosomed his overwrought mind to a sole confidant (one at a time) who remarked with monotonous, pathetic repetition:

"Gee! I wish I was coming along with you."

Which convinced the Tenderfoot that he was going to have a really enviable time.

His evenings were spent in planning routes, buying duffel, explaining the uses of various articles of kit to his relatives (who never failed to remark, "Gee, I wish," etc.), and his bedroom was swamped with railroad guides to the happy hunting ground in the Adirondacks. The rifle—a 38-55, and

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there was added charm in the mystic and to him incomprehensible figures—stood in ostentatious splendor in a corner, except when the Tenderfoot showed it to an admiring sister, flinging it smartly to the hollow of his shoulder; whereat the admiring sister stared, wide-eyed, either in admiration of the mighty man, or in silent, sympathetic comprehension of his almost childlike enthusiasm.

His nights, of course, were spent in the silent wilderness, where the dream trees were bigger and the dream forest more "likely" and gigantic dream deer dashed past, only to fall (in the dream) like collapsing mountains before the unerring 38-55. And in the nights, too, the guides, who had seen tenderfeet come and go, but never such a tenderfoot as this, crowded around the bed to congratulate him in picturesque backwoods dialect on getting the biggest deer with the biggest antlers "ever seen or heard of in these parts—Eight-pronged—*by Jim!*"

To a cynic, had he been able to peep into

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the brain of the Tenderfoot, all this anticipatory dreaming and enthusiasm might have seemed childish, even pitiable. But here's half the joy of the hunt—the expectation, the rehearsing of past performances and the greater ones to come, the fingering of blankets, the oiling of guns, the affectionate hand-weighing of shells and the balancing of hunting knives, the packing and repacking of the basket, and the dreaming over that biggest buck which is still at large and has been seen by every man except the tenderfoot who is after it.

And when the hunter—tenderfoot or veteran—comes to that intermediate stage between the city and the wild things of the forest—the camp on the morning of the first hunt—the pleasure of anticipation reaches the exquisite point. Now he is in the woods which his ancestral instinct has smelled from afar for so long, and just around the next bend of the trail, or beyond that somber-treed ridge, may be the deer whose tracks he has seen about the camp. The very air palpitates with coming sport

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and the blood thrills with that primordial fire which is latent in every man, be he quill driver or sample slinger, or even though he carry a fountain pen or a tapeline in his vest pocket.

No man ever *became* a hunter. He only acquires skill. He was born a hunter. He must hunt something, and it is the fault of modern conditions that dollars and men are the prey.

The Tenderfoot was enjoying himself, without quite realizing it, from the moment he made his decision to go a-hunting. And although his vacation, strictly speaking, embraced only fourteen days, twice that time held the joy of it—seven days of anticipatory pleasures and seven days of after reminiscence, although the first experience is often a whet that wakens the sporting appetite and keeps it keen through the long months of winter business until the next vacation comes around.

When the day of departure for the happy hunting ground came, the Tenderfoot was more like a harmless lunatic let out of an

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asylum for a frolic than a staid manipulator of ink. The railway depot was surcharged with romance; the locomotive of the Adirondack express seemed to be trying to tell in wheezy tones of a doe that crossed the tracks this side of Big Moose, and the Tenderfoot felt inclined to say to the engineer:

"I don't get a dollar a word, but I'm going a-hunting. Shake!"

The sleeper of the Adirondack express is a queer place to study human nature, but the process has unique features. In the winter months this train is largely peopled with invalids seeking health in the mountains, but in the fall it is the vehicle of the antithesis of invalidism. It is the clearing house of Nimrods, mighty in spirit, if not in deeds.

The baggage car, north bound, is a pile of baskets, gun cases, and fishing outfits; south bound, it smells of fish and is daily decorated with antlered triumphs. The smoker of the Pullman, north bound, is the domain of the story teller who was "in camp last year" and of the tenderfoot who swal-

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lows the whole cloth and is eager for more, with or without salt. South bound in fall, the smoker of the Pullman is even more interesting. To the Tenderfoot it was, in some respects, a Fultah Fisher's Boarding House on wheels, where

. . . regally they spat and swore
And fearsomely they lied!

And the Tenderfoot, to be honest about it, lied with the best—or worst—of them.

The Tenderfoot will never forget that night in the smoker while the train sped *northward* to the hunting ground. (I know he won't forget because I have the best of reasons to know that he remembers.) By the time those who had been "in camp last year" had knocked the ashes out of the last pipe and "believed" it was time to turn in, the Tenderfoot was worked up to such a pitch of enthusiasm that he could have sat by an open car window all night and watched the woods go past while he fingered an expectant rifle.

But there was delight in the thought that

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he had only to go to sleep and he would wake up in the hunting grounds with light enough for flying shots from the train vestibule!

You were once a tenderfoot yourself, weren't you? When you woke up in the train that was toiling through the mountain cuts, didn't you—honest, now!—didn't you peep at the big forest on either side of the track and half expect to see an antlered head or a brown quarter vanishing into the somber depths? Didn't you look at those woods with a queer little something of primitive days laughing in your veins and tapping at the doors of your savage heart?

You didn't? Then you have given yourself away! You never were in the big woods. You never have gone a hunting. You are still a tenderfoot!

II

THE GUIDE

Old timers in the hunt invariably engage, beforehand, a guide who has been tried and

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not found wanting in the many peculiar requisite characteristics of a good guide. Very tenderfeet often engage, beforehand, a guide whom they have never seen and know nothing about, whose characteristics they presently learn—sometimes at the cost of what would otherwise have been an enjoyable vacation.

Where a man has but two weeks to spend, his first consideration should be to insure that every minute of his time will be well spent. Given any sort of guide, of course, it will be spent—perhaps well—perhaps too well.

Among guides there are classes as in every other walk of life. But in no walk of life is there so much professional jealousy, so much proneness to mutual boosting or mutual throat cutting. This is a good thing in a way for the amateur hunter (for when guides fall out tenderfeet come by deer), one man being eager to show the amateur what kind of woodsman *he* is, compared with that other “front-door” guide. On the other hand, a tenderfoot, until he

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understands the humors of the guide element, is often mystified as to who is a guide and who is not. The man upon whom he has pinned his faith may not "make good"—bad luck oftener than bad guiding—and his rivals will not fail to draw the tenderfoot aside and say:

"Well, what did ye expect? Next time," etc., etc.

There are cliques among guides. After a couple of hunting trips the amateur will discover that a certain guide is, among certain other guides, a "real old-timer," or the kind of guide who will "show ye deer if any man kin!" Among the woodsmen of the opposite clique the amateur must expect to hear that his guide is a "front-door brave," a "hunter of mighty talks," or a newcomer in these parts who "couldn't tell a skunk from a deer beyont smellin' distance!" And either side will tell you tales by way of illustrating the guide's prowess, or lack of it, in the past.

Ask your own guide about this and he will readily tell you that it is true. A con-

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scientious guide is the severest critic of his fellows who are not conscientious in their methods. In fact, during the last few years, the good guides have formed themselves into an association which aims to protect patrons as well as guides. For they know better than anyone that there are real guides and what might be called "storybook" guides.

Your real guide is a good fellow; modest, willing, and rather averse as a rule to promising game. He will enter into the spirit of the hunt in a way that is democratic without being over-familiar. He will listen to a suggestion—even from a tenderfoot—and not be ashamed to admit that "ye may be dead right at that." He will help you to forget that you are a tenderfoot, with the result that you are presently unashamed to admit it yourself and are frankly eager to learn. With a guide of this sort you are liable to meet a deer, and if it should happen that you fire and miss, he will let you down easy and promise you better luck next

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time, "now that ye know what t' expect an' what to do."

Your story-book guide is very different, if more attractive. He has shot so many deer in his time that you wonder the woods people don't take off their hats at sight of him. He has seen the time when elk pawed at the shack door looking for something to eat. He is so full of tales that when the tenderfoot returns to the city empty handed, he speculates until next season as to whether he was a fool or the guide a four-flusher. In time he learns "Both!" was the answer.

Other types of guides are both good and bad. One will be an expert, able to lead you straight to the deer if he wants to, but he will learn just how long the amateur has to stay in the woods at four dollars per day and expenses, and arrange matters so that you meet the quarry on the last day but one. (The amateur, of course, is always good for the last day—and perhaps more—after a bit of luck.)

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Another type is the guide who humors the tenderfoot, making him feel that he is no tenderfoot, but a mighty Nimrod. He fits his actions and conversations to the temperamental attitude of the amateur and to the tenderfoot's preconceived notions of what a guide and a deer hunt *should* be.

The particular Tenderfoot's fortune, or misfortune (as you may decide) was to fall into the hands of a guide who seemed the embodiment of all the virtues, vices, humors, and bluffs of his craft. The Tenderfoot, it should be understood, was wise in one respect. Realizing in his secret heart that he *was* a tenderfoot, he decided to "go-look-see" before he engaged a guide. He reasoned that at Saranac he would find the man he was looking for, with the aid of the hotel people.

His reasoning was all right. It happened, however, that the hotel clerk was partial to one clique of guides and the hotel manager to another. The Tenderfoot finally decided on the manager's choice, but not before he had met and interviewed the

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clerk's man. The latter was a young guide, quiet and rather diffident. He said he "believed" he could "show" the Tenderfoot some deer.

The manager's choice was a hefty son of northern New York—strong and bulky as a bull and with a bellow which capped the resemblance. Nevertheless he was as lively as a two-year-old in the woods, and the Tenderfoot learned in after seasons that Big George—let's call him Big George—was a capital guide, only— Well, he saw the Tenderfoot, sized up his mental make-up and aspirations, and played the necessary rôle to perfection.

"Well," he roared, shaking the Tenderfoot's hand with his own "grizzly" paw, "be ye goin' after the *deer*?" (The Tenderfoot might have been after bear!)

The Tenderfoot admitted that he aspired to deer slaughter, mentioning (to obviate complications) that he had already practically engaged a guide. Big George looked crestfallen. Apparently he had been anticipating this particular hunt with

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this particular Tenderfoot for a great many years.

"I'm blame' sorry to hear ye say so," said he. "Ye might ha' done better'n Will Ingalls."

A little coaxing "induced" Big George to explain why he looked so grave over the Tenderfoot's first error.

"Well," said Big George in sorrowful tones, "your man's a kinder newcomer in these parts and if ye ain't been much at the deer game yerself what ye need 's an experienced man to show ye right where the deer be. Besides, Will got hisself in trouble last week. Reck'n the special game warden might try to spile yer fun."

The Tenderfoot saw his two weeks shadowed with trouble instead of bright with hunting joy. It took some adroit working, but finally the story of Will Ingalls's misdoings came out. Here it is as Big George told it:

"As I understand, it was like this: Will took a party of young fellers f'm Boston up to the Racquette River. There warn't

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much doin', so one night Will, wantin' to see them git a deer, hit on the easiest way to git one. They made up a jackin'-party.

"Jackin'? Didn't ye never hear tell o' jackin'? Well, deer's a mighty cur'us animal. If it sees a light at night, 'tain't satisfied till it comes up and has a look at it. It's agin the law, but sometimes they go out in a canoe up the river or where the deer are. They stick a lantern on a pole an' the deer comes down to have a peek at it. Then ye got 'em dead sure. But it's agin the law in these parts.

"Well, to get back to the story—which I ain't sayin' there's a word o' truth in it—Will and his boys went out jackin' an' got up pretty clost to Rob Smiley's place. Rob's a special game warden and has a place of his own up by the Racquette River. There was a cracklin' by the water side an' one o' Will's boys—or maybe it was Will hisself—I ain't sayin'—sees the animal an' fires."

"And did he get 'im?" asked the Tenderfoot breathlessly.

"You bet he did!" said Big George.

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"Got him squar' atween the eyes an' when Rob Smiley finds his old nag in the mornin' he comes roarin' up to Will Ingalls's camp and wants to know what the blazes Will means by *pluggin' his hoss!*

"I ain't sayin' as how Will done it, but Rob Smiley's sworn out an affydavy an'," etc., etc.

"Where's yer duffel?" asked Big George when the story was finally stowed away in the locker of significance.

The Tenderfoot had turned his duffel over to the hotel porter at the depot. It is odd how a tenderfoot will parade his hunting armament in the city and modestly hide it at the getting-off place. But Big George hustled off after the duffel, and in some mysterious manner the Tenderfoot found himself an hour later on the wilderness road in Big George's rig, which was laden with guns, baskets, and blankets, *ad infinitum*. The Tenderfoot had been "jacked."

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III

THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUND

The wilderness creeps up to the very edge of an Adirondack town. One mile out from the hotel one might imagine that there was nothing in the world but forest—dense, primeval forest.

Half an hour after leaving Saranac, Big George began to eye the woods. Presently he got out his rifle, suggesting to the Tenderfoot that he unlimber, too.

"Jest as like's not," said he, "we may get a shot at a deer most any place here. Only last week me an' Bert Hargis was comin' along here when a doe run right acrost the road. Bert wasn't lookin' for no deer down so clost to the village. Neither was I, though I knoo there was deer all right. But the best of it was that we was just goin' to say, 'Did ye see that?' when a big buck cut acrost right in the doe's tracks.

"After that I ses to Bert, I ses, 'Bert,'

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ses I, 'I ain't takin' no more chances on this road.' An' I ain't neither. Keep your eyes open an' your gun ready. Ye cain't tell."

Then, while guide and Tenderfoot drove over the thirteen miles to Big George's camp, Big George told stories. *Stories!* Story after story after story, until the Tenderfoot forgot the woods, the deer, the road, and the rifle, everything save the atmosphere of woods, lakes, deer, and hunting which the spellbinder wove about his imagination.

Now here is an odd thing. The particular Tenderfoot is not, strictly speaking, a tenderfoot any longer. His acquaintance with Big George, too, has ripened since that trip and he has hunted and fished over that section many times. Yet he has never known Big George loquacious again—never as he was that first day. He has never heard the wild tales again and he has driven over that bit of road many times without seeing a deer within six miles of Saranac.

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It may be that Big George is changed. Maybe he has reformed. It may be that the Tenderfoot hardly hears those familiar whoppers, as one scarcely hears the ticking of his own watch. It may be that George still tells them to other tenderfeet on their first trip. Whatever the facts in the case, it is certain that Big George, when he goes fishing with his old friend, the Tenderfoot, confines his remarks to this sort of thing:

"I want to swing your line clost to the pick'rel weed."

Half an hour's silence.

"That's a fish! No? Be ye caught on a snag?"

Prolonged silence while the spoon is loosened, the reel paid out, and trolling resumed—silence *ad. lib.*, while Big George rows, smokes, and reflects (without saying anything) about the biggest fish which, in other days, would have been "caught right off that p'int!"

But that first day, Big George, knowing the Tenderfoot's frame of mind, fairly dazzled him with hunting stories. Was it

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the guide's fault or the Tenderfoot's? Neither, I'm thinking. The guide was working for his money in the way that the Tenderfoot expected him to work. Deer? *Real* deer? That was another matter, largely dependent on luck and the Tenderfoot's nerve and skill.

As a matter of fact, the guide would rather take out a man of moderate experience. So far as pecuniary advantage goes, there is none accruing to the guide. But in the case of the Tenderfoot, whether the guide "shows" him deer or not, he has to work—and strain hard—with tongue, tact, and truth. Showing the tenderfoot deer is the easier task very often, but the tenderfoot is liable to miss. Then more tact is necessary to prevent the tenderfoot from blaming his misfortune on the guide. It is, therefore, very necessary for the guide to remove the last doubt as to his own prowess.

To come back to the particular Tenderfoot. It mattered little that he forgot to keep his eye open for deer. None ap-

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peared. Once or twice Big George halted in his monologue to make a pass with his rifle, but he had only had a "peek o' something," which might not have been a deer after all.

A little after dusk he brought his Tenderfoot to the camp—a rough shack away at the head of the Upper Saranac. Shortly after the arrival a couple of old backwoodsmen turned up and hailed Big George as if they hadn't seen him for at least seven years. Also they stayed to supper which they helped to cook. To the Tenderfoot they paid marked courtesy, admiring his gun, balancing it, sighting it, wagging their heads approvingly, and making the Tenderfoot feel sure that he was not as tender as his conscience felt. Also it heightened his liking for Big George's friends—old Dave Harmon and the redoubtable Bert Hargis.

After supper they gathered around the old stove, lit their black, rim-charred pipes, and began the second installment of stories. Stories and more stories! And again the

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Tenderfoot was enjoying himself, reveling in the spirit of the woods. Sixteen times that night he brought down a deer as the others described, with a phenomenal shot.

Big George was comparatively quiet. Maybe he needed a rest after thirteen miles of straight yarn. Bert and old Dave took turns, Big George only chiming in with a "That's so!" when the yarn became so big that an additional corroboration was necessary to the atmosphere of verisimilitude.

Bert and Dave were at their best. Each seemed impatient for the other to conclude his yarn, so that he could get in a "that-reminds-me" which should stake his claim to the floor. Sometimes one would contradict the other flatly, but always on some minor point of geography or date or distance which had no direct bearing on the veracity of the tale. And the Tenderfoot was not so tender but that he noticed one essential feature of the story-bee—that each story of each man redounded to the immense glory, skill, and prowess of one or both of the other two.

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"Talkin' of catamounts," Bert Hargis said, after an argument about elk, "reminds me of how George here shot the panther. 'Member that, George?" Then to the Tenderfoot: "Ye seen that bald mountain crost the lake comin' up? That's Panther Mountain. Know how it got its name?"

A long pause. The Tenderfoot thought and shook his head. Then Bert pointed his pipestem at Big George and said impressively:

"Him! . . . Twenty year ago."

Then came the story of how Big George got caught after dark and camped under a certain tree on the face of the mountain, not knowing that there was a panther roosting in the tree. In the middle of the night George awoke with the idea that the mountain had rolled over on top of him. The panther, suffering perhaps from the nightmare of falling out of bed, had dropped out of the tree plump on George's stomach. When George recovered his breath he was as mad as the panther. The fight that fol-

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lowed, according to my voracious chroniclers, lasted for over an hour.

"That's so!" put in old Dave, while Big George gazed into the stove and nodded reminiscently.

"He was pretty well tore up when he come into camp that night," said Bert Hargis.

"And what became of the panther?" asked the Tenderfoot.

For a minute old Dave and Bert Hargis stared. Then they bellowed with mirth and slapped their legs, repeating over and over between guffaws:

"What become o' the panther? What become o' the panther! George, tell him what become o' the panther."

"I reck'n I skinned him," said Big George modestly. And the incident was closed.

Before Bert and old Dave went back to their own camp that night they volunteered for a drive in the morning, the trail being too noisy for still hunting. And before he went away Bert Hargis found an op-

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portunity to assure the Tenderfoot (privately) that Big George was one of the real old timers, a man who could "lead ye right up to a deer." Old Dave (confidentially) told the Tenderfoot precisely the same thing. And when Bert and old Dave had finally departed down the trail, Big George (secretly) assured the Tenderfoot that Bert Hargis and old Dave Harmon were, taking everything into account, about the best all-round hunters in the Adirondacks!

IV.

HIS FIRST DEER

The Tenderfoot found himself sitting on a knoll at a point where the wilderness breathed all around him and he could see two other knolls and a portion of a little valley. Four days had gone by with no luck for him. True, he had seen a doe, but he had been so surprised that he had forgotten until it was too late what he had come to the Adirondacks for. Bert Hargis,

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too, had brought in a spike-horn buck on the second day, and that, combined with the sight of the doe which the Tenderfoot had been too ashamed to mention, convinced the amateur that there *were* deer and that he was going to get one. The difference between fishing and hunting is that in fishing no luck brings discouragement, while in hunting the same experience only makes the hunter all the keener.

Bert Hargis and old Dave Harmon had stuck by Big George. Thus the Tenderfoot had three guides where he had bargained for only one. But Big George assured him that he would not have to pay the other two.

"They're sports," said Big George.

The Tenderfoot knows now that times were slack with Bert and old Dave and they belonged to George's "crowd." No doubt George paid a slight dividend on settling day, but that was George's affair, not the Tenderfoot's, especially when the arrangement provided three guides for the price of one.

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The Tenderfoot, as I was saying, sat on a knoll with the wilderness breathing all around him. Big George had told him to sit there and not budge.

"Young fellers from the city," he said, "get into the woods, thinkin' they know it all, and it takes us all night sometimes to get 'em out. They try to find themselves and get deeper in. Then they fire a gun and we fire to show 'em we're comin' to take 'em out. They come to meet us, so as to look less like fools, and they make bigger fools of themselves by gettin' twisted again. I ain't sayin' you're sech a fool as that, but ye'd best stay put. If ye get lost, fire a gun and *stay put*."

The Tenderfoot is still sitting on a knoll. Big George was farther to the west, covering another valley. Bert and Dave had gone around to the north, and presently the Tenderfoot heard them barking like dogs. He sat up and watched like a spider with a score of eyes.

Suddenly there came a faint crackling in the brush to the north. It grew louder.

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Something was coming down the valley at a run. The Tenderfoot fidgeted and cocked his rifle. The animal broke cover. The Tenderfoot flung his rifle to his shoulder. Through the sights he saw—*a mongrel pup!*

It was Bert Hargis's pup and it was hunting Bert, although it had lost its tail at the same game on a previous occasion.

The Tenderfoot also saw that the sights of his rifle were bobbing like a cork in water. There was nothing the matter with the sights.

He braced himself and—

There it was! Where it came from is still a mystery to him. It was trotting in almost ghostlike silence down the little hollow, its hoofs lightly lifting and its head erect.

For a moment the Tenderfoot's heart stood still; then he remembered that this was what he had dreamed of and come so far to experience. He would be an embittered man forever after if—

He raised the rifle again and aimed. Then he paused. He seemed to hear Big

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George saying: "And if ye see a deer, *don't be in a hurry.*"

He waited. It was only a few seconds, but it was like five minutes. . . . Now!

The rifle covered the deer full on the left shoulder. The Tenderfoot felt remarkably cool, now that he had come to the crisis. He fired. Before the light smoke cleared he heard a crash in the foliage and felt as if every nerve in his body was let loose and yelling:

"Missed! *Missed!* MISSED!"

Then he looked, and his eyes saw nothing where the deer had been. He followed the line of its probable forward course, and all at once his heart began to swell and beat like a riveter's hammer. He felt very pale and as if his mouth had stretched and was pinned at the back of his neck in a fixed grin.

He had *not* missed!

The Tenderfoot did most of the talking that night in camp. Big George and Bert Hargis and old Dave Harmon did the

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listening. The Tenderfoot was at his best and he could tell as good a hunting story as anybody in the woods.

He had nearly a week's growth of beard on his face. He looked like a tramp, but he felt like a king. No man thereafter could imply by word, thought, or look that he was a Tenderfoot.

After Bert Hargis and old Dave went off to their camp for the night, Big George turned a pair of queerly questioning eyes upon his charge.

"Well," said he, sort of wonderingly, "so ye got a deer, did ye?"

"George," said the Tenderfoot magnanimously, "you'll find it in the bottom of my bag. Help yourself."

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IF lions were as common and as easy hunting as squirrels, who would hunt lions? Who would spend thousands of dollars on the kit necessary for an African trek, run the risk of death by snake bite, fever, tsetse-fly, sleeping sickness, or any other of the woolly terrors of the Dark Continent, if the sporting instinct did not demand even chances between the lion and the man?

The man, on one side of the game, is possessed of brains, although they will count for nothing if he succumbs to jungle perils, and he is armed with weapons which his brain cunning has evolved against brute instinct. The lion, on the other side, is entrenched behind barriers almost impregnable against the white man, and he is armed with a brute instinct and cunning which no human possesses. So the man has by no

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means the best of it, although he might have if he were unsportsmanlike enough to wish it.

But the first rule of sport is even chances and no favor. The man who snarls and growls and swears "there ain't no fish" because none bites ought not to be classed as one of the brotherhood of sportsmen. We cannot all of us afford to go lion-hunting in Africa, but in a humbler way at home we *do* try to make the best sport of the littlest game.

The hunter who bags the limit of two deer in a season and growls at the restrictions of the law is a "hog"; the fellow who bags one deer and "home rejoicing comes" may or may not be a sportsman; but the hunter who bags not even a jack rabbit after spending his entire vacation in the pursuit and cheerfully says: "Hard luck. Next time—" is a sport from his moccasins up! He'll come again next year and be all the keener for his previous defeat.

But to come to the point—and then the story: A phase of the true sporting in-

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instinct is that, when you have won a coveted trophy, you are anxious to secure another of another sort. The more difficult the new task, the better pleased you are with the job you have set yourself; and the longer delayed the achievement, the greater the triumph in perspective. It is like Sir Thomas Lipton and that cup— But, there! Sportsmen will know what I mean!

Granting, then, that the joy of the hunt is in the difficulty of the quarry, let's go stalking the slippery seal!

Here is a sport which the mind at once associates with Arctic necessity. Also, the mind questions the word "sport," recalling tales of the brutality of killing seal and of the tender-hearted, sea-faring ruffian who looked into the "liquid, appealing eyes" of the seal and "just couldn't do it." This may be all right in the Arctic and Antarctic where, perhaps, seal are so unused to the wiles of the hunter that they can be trained to the bottle diet. But if the popular novelist would try his skill at bagging "soulful-eyed" seal around the Bay of Fundy islands

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off the northeast end of Maine, he would revise his literary works, or never cease to wonder why he never got near enough to see the whites of the liquid, pleading eyes.

A seal is the slickest, smoothest, slipperiest article that ever fired a sportsman's ambition. If you don't believe it, "Read, Mirza!" as the old Oriental said when he was itching for a story.

I was sitting on the veranda of an inn on Campobello Island in Passamaquoddy Bay, wondering what source of amusement deep-sea fishermen found in a man playing a scrappy rock-cod with a fly rod, when an Openango Indian with his squaw came along and laid at my feet a big basket full of quaint works of aboriginal art, with an invitation to buy.

There were clay pipes bound with grass, baskets woven of varicolored fibers, all sweet-smelling, wooden plates carved with tepees and tomahawks and Indian sign language, and there were beaded tobacco pouches. But what attracted me was a pelt of shining, silver-gray hair about the

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size of a dogskin. In the basket I could see purses and moccasins made of the same cozy-looking material.

"Seal," said Chief Tomah Neptune, of the Openango royal family of Neptune.

"Where from?"

He pointed to the rocks. The great Fundy tide was on the ebb.

"Get um here—no much," said Tomah. "Other side plenty. Here too much Boston steamboat, though me see four two-day-gone Duck Cove by Lubec Narrows. Other side Cam'bello plenty—'round ledges Grand Manan, too—all place at low tide. But," he added with an aboriginal smile, "you can't get. Can't get!"

"Can't I? Why not?"

"Too smart. Too quick. Only Indian can get."

Now, wouldn't that annoy a white man! To whistle up the Fundy lad, who was guide and local philosopher, order a rig for the run to the ocean side of the island, fetch a rifle and some cartridges, and get into rough togs was fifteen minutes' lively step-

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ping. The tide was ebbing fast and Tomah's alleged ledges should be visible.

Once on the hard shell road which crosses



"Too Smart. Too Quick. Only Indian Can Get."

Campobello through three miles of balsam, spruce, and pine, I told Marvin, the philosophic guide, what I was after.

"You can't shoot 'em," said he. "Anyway, they ain't good for nothing."

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I said nothing to this. It was Marvin who laughed loudest at the idea of a man catching big, deep-sea fish "on a tin pole with a wheel on it, when it was easier an' more payin' to land 'em with a scoopin' net."

"Thought you was goin' after duck, maybe," said Marvin.

"With a rifle?"

"If ye was a good shot," said Marvin thoughtfully, "ye'd be surer of killin' 'em that way."

It was Marvin's first experience as a guide. He was not yet experienced in the tactful requirements of guidehood. He would plunge a tenderfoot in gloom in five minutes by saying: "It's like to rain. Don't think there'll be any fish to-day any way. But if ye want to try, why—"

He was young in years as well as in experience as a guide. As a Bay of Fundy deep-sea fisher lad, he knew it all; but deep-sea fishing for profit is one thing and sport another. An interesting lad was Marvin, though, as a study. For one thing, he be-

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lieved that the souls of dead people sometimes went into animals.

There was one time he saw a rabbit sitting not ten paces away. He raised his rifle and—"somethin' about that rabbit told me not to fire." Perhaps the rabbit was a perfectly unpossessed rabbit. Perhaps the innate sporting instinct of the white man whispered that it was "too easy."

Whenever he chopped wood, by the way, he had hemorrhages. So he never chopped wood. An unsympathetic, unfeeling person discovered that his hemorrhages were merely the nose-bleeding of a healthy youngster. But Marvin refused to believe it and still steadfastly eschews wood-chopping.

This to introduce friend Marvin.

We came out of the woods abruptly. We had reached a great semicircling beach looking through two great rocky heads toward the Bay of Fundy. Herring Cove was as placid as a mountain lake at dusk and even the great bay was so mirrorlike that Nova Scotia was miraged in air, and two little

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islands—The Wolves—were topsy-turvy upon themselves—lighthouse tip touching lighthouse tip, like a folded cut-out paper unfolded.

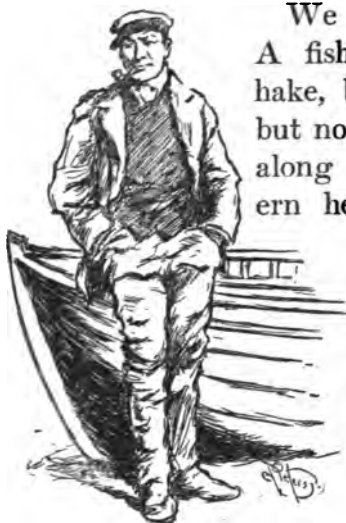
Occasionally there was a heavy splash in the fish weirs, telling of a finny tribe (probably pollock) caught in the toils of the deep-sea toilers. A pair of ducks flew, long-necked, over one of the heads, while the raucous laughter of a pair of ravens came from the woods. A few minutes before, we had passed a thin, fresh-water lake which looked trouty. On the whole, this side of the island had the air of a likely place for sport. And just then the air was broken by a faint mew.

"Cats!" said I, with infinite disgust.

"No. Reckon that's a seal," said Marvin, as if it really made no difference. I was agog on the instant.

"Maybe it's in the weir," said Marvin. "Sometimes they get caught like that. . . . It would be easier shootin' him there," he added, with that jarring practical note of his.

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**This to Introduce Friend
Marvin.**

We watched the weir.
A fish leaped—a silver
hake, by the flash of it,
but no seal. We walked
along the grassy south-
ern head toward the
rocky point,
keeping a sharp
lookout. To the
left was Herring
Cove; to the
right of the head
another—Rac-
coon Cove. The
point of rocks
stretched far out,

weedy and fresh after their twelve-hour
submersion. The tide was not yet full out
and the sea was blotted by rock points, ever
rising as the sea slipped backward from the
shore.

Again came the far, faint mew—for all
the world like a kitten mewling or a stout
gentleman yawning. Marvin's ear got the
direction and for a minute he stood looking

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away over Raccoon Cove to the fast-spreading ledges in the middle of the bay.

"There's three of them—four, maybe," said he coolly.

"Three!—four! What?"

"Seals," said Marvin laconically.

I looked, as a man will at something he very much wanted to see. I could make out two or three gray spots on the ledge—and that was all. Presently there came the cat-like call again and one of the gray spots spread into a blot of white. The seals were up on the ledge, sensuously rolling in the sunlight. They were fully one thousand yards from us.

I looked at the weedy rocks. Even if I reached the land point nearest to the ledge without dropping, gun-laden, into one of the many deep, watery chasms between, I must still be too far away for a decent shot at a vague gray object.

"We might get a boat," I whispered—why I whispered I don't know—"and row quietly around in the shelter of the rocks until—"

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"I'd hev to steal a boat," said Marvin.

"Well, beg, borrow, or—the point is *get* one!"

Marvin went back to Herring Cove in search of a boat, after suggesting that I climb down to the point of the head, where he would pick me up.

I got to the farthest land point without disturbing the seals, which were still lolling about on the ledge. As I sat on the rock waiting for the nefarious Marvin, a flat brown head with little eyes, a large bill, and a longish neck, turned and looked at me rather quizzically. It was a black duck—a drake, rather.

The bird sat on a near rock regarding me. The temptation to "flush" the game and fire was strong, but I was after seal. "'Twas ever thus!" Presently the wild duck flapped into the sea and swam leisurely away into the hidden pools between the rocks.

I took a last peep at the seals as Marvin came around with the boat. They were apparently unsuspecting. During the next

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ten minutes we were rowing softly, or paddling, or pulling ourselves along the rock sides of the water channels, ever drawing nearer the seals.

There was one big, rocky knob which I hoped to reach unobserved. Then I could crawl to the smooth slanting summit and get a shot at about three hundred yards. But in crossing the strait of water to it, minor projecting rocks would force us out of the line of concealment.

"You've just got to chance it," I said to Marvin. "Go ahead—quietly. They may not see us."

But at the first diversion from the line of concealment there came a high-pitched nasal cry from the ledge, followed by a splash—two splashes—three!—four!

"Row straight to the ledge!" I whispered excitedly, still full of hope. "There may be one behind there."

Marvin rowed while I crouched in the bow with the rifle ready cocked. Landing on the slippery, sea-weedy ledge I found—nothing! Even as I stood there reflecting upon

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the slipperiness of seals, a round whiskered head popped up in the sea about fifty yards away. The rifle barked. Pop! went the



“Told Ye They Was Too Smart,” Said the Consoling Marvin.

head simultaneously. *Bang!* went Marvin’s shotgun in another direction. The shot sprayed like a comet’s tail on the sea, but that head was gone, too.

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"Told ye they was too smart," said the consoling Marvin.

We rowed back to Herring Cove and left the boat where Marvin had found it. There was one consolation. There *were* seals—and they would take some hunting.

Next day I went alone—rode boot and saddle and tied up in the woods near the southern head. I had decided that the boat was of little use. I could never get near enough. To-day I wanted to reconnoiter and plan.

I sat on the head smoking, with the rifle beside me. I watched the tide fall and the green tips of the ledges come through the surface. By and by the seals crawled up and began their low-tide play. I was too far off for them to feel or take alarm, although I have no doubt they saw me.

Just as I was about to give up in disgust, I made a discovery. On the previous day I had not observed the full extent of the tide-fall. Now, at low tide, I discovered that I could walk dry-shod to that big, rocky knob which faced the ledge

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that held my seals three hundred yards beyond.

In a moment I was on my feet and making for it, taking advantage—even at that distance—of every bit of cover. It took me twenty minutes to reach the rear base of that extreme knob of rock. The last glimpse I had had of the seal ledge there were five seals lolling on it. The back of the rock was almost perpendicular; also it was as slippery as—as a seal. But I clawed my way to the top, where I lay on the smooth inward slope, letting my breath and my heart get back to aim-steadiness.

Then with the rifle cocked and shouldered I wriggled up and forward on my elbows. The barrel was now over the top and I lowered the muzzle by raising myself until my eyes peered through the peep-sight, level with the ledge where the seals were.

Through the sight I saw the ledge—and that was all!

“Oh—you—slick—beggars!” I said to the vacant ledge. “But, by thunder! I’ll

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get one of you if I have to stay here all summer."

I waited a while and saw the seals pop their mocking heads above the water, but there was little use in wasting powder. On



"Oh!— You — Slick — Beggars!"

the previous night Tomah, the Indian, had told me that one had to shoot them on the ledges—a straight head shot—otherwise they got into the water, where, dead or alive, they sank to the bottom.

I waited a while, then rode back to the inn on the civilized side of the island. But I had a plan. To-morrow I would come

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early—before the tide had ebbed enough to show the tops of the ledges. If the seals were still at the bottom of the sea, they would hardly take notice of a boat which would be rowed to the rocky knob long before low water. The ebbing tide would leave the boat high and dry, even as it brought the ledges to view and the seals to the ledges. But I would be in by the “early doors,” sitting in a front seat all ready for the show.

Next day I put the plan into execution. The ledges were invisible, only a lighter hue of the sea marking their location, and the waters of Raccoon Cove were placid and unbroken. The tide was ebbing as I moored the boat to the rock and crawled to my hiding place.

Have you ever watched a tide go out? Even in the Bay of Fundy, where the big, rapid tide is a true thing spoken in jest, it seemed like the watched pot—the slowest, weakest, most miserably tedious phenomenon in the world. Like the old man who had never seen the ocean before, if I hadn’t

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watched a stone with my eye, I wouldn't have believed that there was any such thing in the world as a tide.

Watching that stone and the increasing ripples where the sea's bones were about to break through the sea's skin at the ledges had a soporific effect. My eyes grew sleepy from staring at the sunlit sea, and the smell of the salt, wet weed of the rocks acted like some kind of volatile anesthetic.

It was an ideal place for dreaming, anyway. I puffed away at a pipe and rolled over on my side. Away off to the east were the cliffs of Grand Manan, their rugged contour ghostly distinct in the clear air. An unseen steamer, bound out of St. John, no doubt, left a ten-mile, comet-like stratum of smoke on the horizon. The Wolves were again in mirage, while over the intervening calm waters flocks of little sea geese skimmed like driven spray or snow flurries.

I was startled presently by a terrific snore and a rush of water. I peered over the rock. Between me and the seal ledge a patch of sea was strangely perturbed.

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Now what could that be making all that disturbance?

I watched. Presently, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a great, mountainous back roll upward and over—in a kind of somersault—about one hundred yards to the left of the spot where I had first noted the disturbance. Then came a mighty snore—like an exhaust—and a shower of water lashed into spray by a great tail.

It was a whale!—come into the warm cove waters either in play or in pursuit of young herring.

For a moment I was of a mind to put a bullet into it at the next “blow.” (It was heading to pass near my rock.) Back at the inn they were smiling over my sealing excursions. What a revenge to go back and say casually:

“I’ve shot a whale, by the way. Would you mind sending four or five motor boats to tow it around?”

I had to laugh at the fantastic idea. My gun would just tickle the monster, which usually takes a harpoon and a hundred

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fathoms of rope, and no easy task at that. I decided to let the whale depart untickled and wait for seals.

The ledges were visible by this time. The seals had not yet appeared. The boat was lying on its side, hidden by the big rock, and the passage behind the rock was almost dry. It would soon be time.

I filled my pipe again and lay on the warm odorous seaweed, feeling very contented. It was a fine place to spend a summer afternoon, even if the seals never came. I looked at the wooded island—a bit of the Maine woods detached from the main woods. Ha! It had a great history, this island. It used to be owned by a choleric old British admiral who ruled it and its people like a lord of the manor. He had a wooden leg—or was it a hook for a hand?—and he carried a telescope.

Kidd, of course, had buried treasure here, but in this case somebody had found the treasure and made off with it without even gratifying other people's curiosity. Other people found the hole, the outlines of a

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clamped iron chest, and some pieces of eight. I wonder what the other fellows got away with?

Then there was the time of the embargo, when Campobello was a handy place for smuggling, between Moose Island and Nova Scotia (called "Sweden," with a wink). Lord! how they did smuggle—flour, merchandise, even Virginia negroes for the West Indian plantations.

I was getting dreamy—sleep-dreamy. This wouldn't do. I was after seals, and their hunt precludes sleep.

I turned to the ledges. One seal had crawled half way out of the water and was looking around. I popped down again. Give 'em time. Give 'em time!

The whale was still playing around the head, coming up about every minute to blow off its great exhaust. I had never been on such close intimacy with a whale—or seal, either. This was the great sea, indeed . . . the sea one reads about in books. Think of the "wonders of the Lord" down there in the "great waters"—down in the

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green depths. Matthew Arnold, wasn't it?
The sonorous Matthew. He knew—

Sandstrewn caverns cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep. . . .

How did the thing go, anyway?

Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
And the salt weed sways in the stream.
Where the sea-beasts rang'd all round
Feed in the ooze of the pasture-ground . . .

But there was something about whales.
That whale, you see, was the cause of it all.

Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye.

Ah, yes. . . . Round and round and
round for ever and ever, amen! . . . It
must be great to be a whale. . . ,

When I awoke the sun was a different
color and the shadows were longer. Also,
it was a little cool. It was a moment before
I realized that the mighty Nimrod had been
asleep for hours. I looked quickly at the
ledges in Raccoon Cove. The turned tide

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had not yet covered them, but there was not a sign of a seal. That was queer. I had been *very* still.

I looked behind me and my heart almost stopped beating. The tide had filled the channel. I was cut off from land, and it would soon be dark. I suffered a few seconds of acute fear before I remembered and saw the boat. I climbed in quickly and got ashore, feeling self-congratulatory for at least one thing. I found the horse, half asleep, too. Then I had a good laugh. It had been a sleepy afternoon all round.

When I got back to the inn I met Tomah, the Indian. I explained the whole scheme and how the seal had failed to enter into it by making an appearance. (While I spoke of the snoring whale I said nothing of the snoring Nimrod.) How did he account for the seal's behavior?

As I was speaking, Tomah's black eyes were riveted upon the pipe which reeked between my teeth.

"You smoke pipe on big rock?" said he.

"Yes."

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“Huh!” Tomah ejaculated with a grin.
“*Seal smellee man smoke!*”

My friend, Merriman, found me on the inn veranda three days later, disconsolately pondering on the slipperiness of seals. Merriman owned a sailboat with a “kicker” attachment, on the revised Shakespearean principle that “it boots *some* to resist both wind and tide.”

“You’re coming with us for a sail around Grand Manan,” he stated.

“No,” was the ungracious reply. “I’m going after seals.”

“Look here,” said Merriman, in a kindly, brotherly way, “you can’t get a seal that way. They see, smell, and hear in a way you can’t understand. It’s only the Indian who can land ’em around these waters. They shoot ’em even in the water and spear them from the bottom at low tide. Out on the big Fundy ledges beyond Manan, especially the Merrill Ledges or Cross Jack Ledge, you would stand a better chance of a kill before they could reach the water.”

“Show me Cross Jack Ledge—quick.”

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"Well," said Merriman, "it would mean two days—more if there was fog—and sleeping in the cockpit. Next week we'll get up an expedition with old Captain Cheney. He's the original seal-hunter. In the meantime, come with us to-day. Bring your rifle and we'll take in the Gull Ledges to the east of Grand Manan."

So I went, not at all sure that I had a right to be enjoying myself as matters stood between seal and me. But I took my rifle along and sat before the mast.

We came under the great cliffs of Grand Manan, where only a short time ago the *Hestia* piled up, and only six came ashore alive. There were reefs everywhere and every one of them could tell a story of a wooden wall or a mass of steel flung upon its fangs. But Commodore Merriman was at the wheel and the rest of the party cheerfully drew corks and opened sardine cans.

When we rounded the queer-shaped extremity of Grand Manan called the Southern Cross, and headed northeast, a southwest breeze saved gasoline, and we tore ahead

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under sail. About two in the afternoon we sighted the Gull Ledges and Merriman got the glasses.

"Forrad ahoy!" he hailed. "There's seal for you if you can get up to them."

With the naked eye I could see nothing but gray specks, but I knew by this time what gray specks meant.

Merriman kept away from the ledges, sailed past them, then put the sloop on the starboard tack until we had the ledges to windward. Then he hove to and pulled in the dinghy. I got into the bow. He took the oars, while an elderly New York gentleman with the spirit of a twenty-year-old took the stern, "for ballast and for fun," as he said.

As we rowed away from the sloop, the other members of the party warned us that they would play audience and would expect the worth of their delay. From the deck they could plainly see the seals on the first of the ledges. The seals saw them, too, and as we rowed toward the rocks they dropped into the sea, one by one, and vanished.

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"That's all right," said Merriman. "There are lots on the farther ledges and you can shoot from this first one."

We crept in slowly and quietly. The sea close to the first ledge was a thick mass of submarine jungle. We had practically to force the boat through it. Then the rocks were so slimy that a landing was difficult. I had come with creepers on heavy boots; Merriman, with rubber yachting shoes, could keep a footing—a wet footing, but the spirited old gentleman slid into the sea the moment he stepped on the weeds. He was rescued by the commodore—Merriman.

"I think, after all, I'll stay in the boat," said the spirited old gentleman. "I'm not as young or as much of a fool as that!"

By this time I was climbing over the ledge. It was a ghastly place, infested by hideous crabs and leaping, antennæd shrimps that came in myriads from black, watery chasms among the weed-draped rocks. I would much rather fall into the sea itself than into one of those upthrust specimens of weird, sea-bottom grottos.

STALKING THE SLIPPERY SEAL

They suggested sea serpents, sirens, and drowned seamen with horrible realism.

When I reached the highest point of the rocks and peered over I saw a sight that was worth all previous efforts. I ducked down and wildly beckoned the commodore, who was still scaling the "maritime" alps. I beat the air with my hand as a hint for him to advance shoulders down. He reached my side and I whispered: "*Look!*"

He looked and said, "Gee-e-e-e!" It certainly was a sight. The ledge upon which we stood ended abruptly and precipitously. There was a passage of ocean about two hundred yards across and on the other side of it was a second ledge, inhabited by as motley a crowd of sea creatures as even the imagination could conceive.

There were seals—a dozen of them, sleeping or quarreling or sitting, head erect, like sphinxes gazing at the sea desert; monstrous crabs, gannet, sea geese, herons, and wild duck, while among the nooks and crannies darted Mother Carey's chickens.

My eye was fixed on a big bull seal, which

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was silhouetted on a little bluff of rock around which the sea swashed and gurgled. For a moment I thought of the audience on the sloop. I could almost imagine some one saying: "Bet he misses!" Then—

I cautiously slipped the barrel of the rifle over the rock. It was a peep-sight and the gun was firmly resting on solid stone. I could not miss, yet I waited and waited until the slightly swaying sight came plumb in the middle of the peep and in line with the center of the bull's round head.

"*Byangk!*" snapped the rifle.

"*Got him!*" yelled Merriman.

The light cloud of white smoke flew to leeward. I stared. I had been *winkless*. I saw the great bull, head down on the rock. It gave a convulsive struggle. Then another. The ponderous body rolled over and the white belly—

My heart sank like a plummet. The dead seal, in that last convulsion, began to slide slowly down the slimy side of the weedy rock. It stuck once, then a sucking wave drew it into the sea.

STALKING THE SLIPPERY SEAL

In a moment Merriman was dashing toward the boat, I after him, both of us regardless of sea chasms or slippery rocks. In two minutes we were cutting through the channel toward the second ledge. The seal might be lying in the shallows. Heads



Administered Restoratives.

were popping up all around us, for at the shot there had been a general panic in that marine menagerie, splashing and mewing and screaming and up-flurrying of seals, gulls, and ducks.

The boat shot alongside the ledge. Here again the water was thick with sea jungle. We tore the weeds apart. Below was

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dense, black water. We plunged an oar in. We could touch no bottom!

"Lost!" said Merriman emphatically. "It's too deep. But," he said, with sympathetic emphasis, "you *got* him all right!"

Then they brought me aboard the sloop. The audience was silent in the presence of such poignant grief and disappointment. They administered restoratives and removed the rifle from my reach.

As an artist finishing a story, or a hunter concluding a tale, I might say that I brought that seal aboard and am now wearing a sealskin vest made of it. But I am honest.

A week later we were to have gone to the Merrill Ledges with the original seal-hunter, Captain Cheney. But a fog made one postponement. Then a block fell and hit Captain Cheney's foot instead of the deck, and that made another. Then my vacation ended and the seal were safe.

But by the nine gods I swore that the next summer— However!

**DEEP-SEA FISHING WITH A
FLY ROD**



DEEP-SEA FISHING WITH A FLY ROD

SOME people like fish but don't like fishing. Some people swear by fishing while forswearing fish. The happy out-of-doors person is the one who likes both fish and fishing—the sportsman who discovers a tastier smack in the eating of what he bags, or lands, himself.

Besides that, if there is allied with the hunting or angling instinct the primordial desire for something to eat, the pursuit of the elusive game is just that much more worth while. For instance, my friend Horgan, spending his vacation in Passamaquoddy Bay last summer, used to set out of a morning with no grub-pack, and he would refuse supper when he came home of an evening. In fact, while others were eating, he would dose over an open fire with a pipe

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between his teeth and the look of a man who has no need for chefs and larders.

Horgan, you see, would start out with no particular objective, or destination—which is the straightest way to enjoyment of an outing. He would go forth in the dawn, armed with a rifle, rod and tackle, ax, hunting-knife, cartridge belt and revolver, and somewhere about his comfortable person he was sure to have a collapsible cup, several yards of triple-width canvas, a coffee pot, a spoon, a camera, and some salt!

“I just go where fancy takes me,” Horgan explained to me, “spread my canvas as shelter at some likely looking place, chop wood with the ax, make a fire and set water to boil in the coffee pot, catch a haddock in some bay, or a trout in some stream, put that to the bake, and maybe add a duck while waiting. Then I’d have a feed, snooze for a while, take a few snapshots of the surrounding scenery, just to remind me of the fun when I got back to Wall Street, and if nothing better turned up or suggested itself, I’d while away the rest of the

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afternoon exploring my surroundings or clipping the tips off branches in revolver practice."

In short, friend Horgan used to play amateur Robinson Crusoe with eminent success, usually on some speck of a wooded islet in Passamaquoddy Bay, or out in the bigger Bay of Fundy. And he found it quite practicable and enjoyable.

Of course, you can't do that sort of thing where there is no dependable supply of wooded islets, or fish, or game. I fancy Horgan's rod must have seen more service than his rifle did where he camped. But the dependability of fish supplies made the independability of hot-blooded game more charming as a possibility.

However, Horgan has nothing to do with this story, save as he suggests something to the man who has a short vacation. I have gone out partridge hunting with a shotgun and brought home a buck, but I have also gone buck-hunting with a 30-30 and missed a pair of partridges roosting at twenty yards. Carry miscellaneous "duffel," as

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Horgan did, camp at a likely place, and if you don't get a shot at something ducky or deery, you will, at least, no doubt, get a fish.

That's all Horgan has to do with the story—which I am coming to in a minute. Horgan and his all-embracing outfit are, like the incidental charms in outing, the incidentals of an outing story. There is that about sporting narrative which is conducive to diversion by way of illustration—or just—just by the way!

Anyhow, it was Horgan who suggested, by way of narrated joys, a vacation among the islands of Passamaquoddy Bay. Elsewhere I have set forth some adventures and misadventures while stalking the slippery seal around Campobello Island. Between times I fished, and it was about my fishing for deep-sea spoil with a fly-rod that my friend Marvin—a Fundy fisher lad—remarked that “a man's a fool to catch pollock on a tin rod with a wheel when it's more payin' with a hand line or a scoopin' net.”

You see, Marvin was essentially commer-

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cial in his angling exploits. You have met him in "Stalking the Slippery Seal," but you may want to know more of him. Well, here is how I met him.

I had been vainly casting for trout in Lake Glensevern—a little lake in the Campobello woods—and had returned, a bit disheartened, to the beach, when I ran into Marvin, with his uncle and a patriarchal Noah of the great waters splitting fish. Marvin surveyed me and my steel rod in curious silence for a while. Then he drawled:

"Ketch any fish—with *that*?"

I had to confess defeat. He smiled in a way that stirred me to a defense of the "tin rod with the wheel." I explained that the rod was all right; hinted that I wasn't so bad myself, and put the whole blame on Glensevern's paucity of finny matter.

"Reck'n there's trout aplenty," Marvin drawled, as he dressed a haddock with three chops and one scrape of his big knife. "Ketched 'em myself—with my hands—for fun. But they ain't worth nothing. Takes

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about five hundred to make a kentle, an' pollock's sellin' better at Eastport."

Wouldn't that make the feeblest sportsman wince! But it was right enough from his standpoint. Marvin had been brought up to regard angling as dollars and cents, the sea as the pit, and fish as the stuff to be cornered. When he awoke in the dawn he instinctively glanced at the sea and sky and mentally followed the probable movements of the herring shoals or the pollock schools.

All the other Campobellians would be doing the same thing, and if the signs were right, a score of boats would presently put off and "kick" away to a point on the broad bay—a point where, to the untrained eye, there was no suggestion of more or less fishiness than elsewhere. Yet Marvin knew, as did every Campobellian, by inherited instinct.

Marvin and his uncle and the patriarchal Noah proceeded with their work in silence. When they had cleaned the last of the morning's catch, they wiped their hands, glanced

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at the ebbing tide, and marched in Indian file to a dory. Marvin glanced at me over his shoulder, smiled pityingly, and said:

"If ye want to see fish and fishin', come on out with us." I jumped at the chance. Marvin looked thoughtful for a moment, then added gratuitously: "It won't cost ye anything."

Five minutes later, a crude motor boat was barking out to sea, the exhaust pipe—an upright funnel—coughing nauseously at my left ear. Marvin opened a locker and handed me a pair of oilskin breeches—*scale-armored!* As I put them on and was crowned with a grimy sou'wester, a score of boats came from the land circle of the bay, all making for that invisible point. The words of Kingsley suggested themselves:

"Three fishers went sailing out into the west,
Out into the west as the sun went down.

.

For men must work, and women must weep,
And there's little to earn and many to keep;
Tho' the harbor bar be moaning."

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In a little while we were anchored as one of a cluster of fishing craft—dories, sloops, motor boats, every conceivable kind of vessel. With business-like celerity Marvin produced the hand lines, each with a great leaden weight and an immense hook. The hooks he baited with young herring, a tremendous haul of which had been taken from one of the seines that morning. Then over went the lines, mine included, with a hollow, watery “plunk,” and cord was paid out rapidly. Despite the great “sinkers,” the flowing tides and the mazy Fundy currents swept the lines away at an astonishing angle from the boat.

When the lines were down, Marvin, his uncle, and the patriarchal Noah began “jigging,” or sawing the lines through well-worn grooves in the gunwale—“jig-sawing,” one might say. Presently Marvin gave a mighty “jig-saw” and rapidly hauled in his line, hand over hand, his back straining to the task. Out of the gray-green depths came what seemed to me—after much fresh-water adventuring—a mighty fish.

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Marvin yanked it—yes, *yanked* it with a mighty yank—aboard. It was a beautiful, white-bellied, gray-blue-backed, twelve-pound pollock.

Just as Noah began hand-over-hauling, I felt a slight disturbance on my line. I pulled in rapidly, but the resistance was not very mighty. Still, I had a fish. It was an aggrieved looking creature with a wide, dolorous mouth and—and *whiskers!* I heard a cackle from an adjacent boat. As a stranger—one of those “no use” fellows who fish for fun—I had, perhaps, been under observation. Anyhow, somebody cackled.

“It’s a hake,” said Marvin, jigging away.

With his disengaged hand he took my line, cracked it like a whip, and the hake, scorned, was delivered back to its element, suffering only from shock and surprise.

It was an exciting time out there for a while—exciting from a rush-business, rather than a sporting, point of view. All around was a little floating, bobbing, highly-populated fishing village, whose inhabitants were

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jig-sawing and yanking, baiting and hauling. The fish were coming in almost as quickly as a man could bait and fling, sink his line and haul in again. And every fish weighed at least seven pounds. These were the great waters whence the cities' supplies of fish came, the waters where

. . . "Men must work and women must weep
And there's little to earn and many to keep."

Everywhere on the American shore were canning factories and fish wharves, each fronted by its big raising derricks and sorting wheels. On the Canadian side of Passamaquoddy Bay, the islands arose, fresh and green and somehow very English with their white and red-roofed cottages. Between the shores and around the fishing fleet, which was clustered on the invisible international line of demarcation, darted a pompous little slate-colored craft—the Dominion Government's fish patrol, called for short, the *Pup*.

The *Pup's* duty was to see that no American fished on the Canadian side, although

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it seemed that the Canadians could fish in American waters. The *Pup* also had an eye open for lobster poachers and other law-breakers along the international line.

Presently, while I was jigging and hauling (with surfeiting good luck), there came a rush of water through the fleet, like that produced by a local squall. It was caused by a great school of pollock chasing shrimp, or perhaps young herring, near the surface. Leaping at times clear into the air, the pollock showed a remarkable amount of spirit in their pastime of hunting. To me it was a great sight, but the Fundy men only grunted. It was common enough in Passamaquoddy Bay—the frequent sight having suggested the name of the bay to the original Openango Indians, “*passamaquoddy*” meaning simply in the Indian tongue, “pollock fish.”

A couple of fishing craft, that had not yet dropped anchor, shot away from the outskirts of the floating village, propelled by lusty oarsmen. The two boats raced in commercial rivalry to head off the schools.

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In the bow of each stood a man with an immense scooping-net on the end of a pole. Right into the whirling foam of the racing school darted the boats. Down went the scoops with a delve, and next minute dexterous, trained hands were hauling a burdened net alongside. It was a good haul, each net having scooped in from ten to twenty ten-pounders. At that, and seeing the schools coming to the surface, several more boats left the floating village and joined in the pursuit of the pollock with scooping-nets.

It was interesting to watch the life of it without participating. By this time I was sick of yanking in big fish. It savored too much of cold-blooded business to be enjoyable after the novelty had worn off. The boats by this time were low in the water under their great burdens of fish. As the blue dusk thickened, anchors were weighed and the floating village broke up. Ashore there was a night's work ahead—splitting, cleaning and salting the fish, which would presently go to the ends of the earth—espe-

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cially to the West Indies and South America—as “salt cod.”

In the middle of the night I was struck with an idea—the sort of idea that hits so hard that, if you happen to be asleep, you wake up with the sense of a burglar in the room. Why not use a fly-rod on those schools of twelve-pound pollock!

After days of casting for a solitary trout, or an indifferent pickerel, the thought of a big fellow of the deep sea making the reel buzz like a wasp with a sore head and the pole bending like a bow and— The thought made the imagination race and the nerves thrill.

There was no more sleep that night—or morning, for it was on toward daylight. I just lay there, thinking what a fool I had been not to think of it on the previous day and imagining that, with a light fly-rod, I was doing battle with a deep-sea cod, a giant halibut, or a significant pollock, with an occasional nibble from a whale.

Of course, I had heard (from fresh-water fishermen) that salt-water fish were not

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great fighters, that they were ponderous and sluggish and not worthy of the subtle bamboo or the nimble steel. Yet what I had seen on the previous day of the lithe pollock leaping on the surface, or coming like lariat-ed broncos out of the sea depths on Marvin's hand line, suggested that they were lively enough, strong enough, and big enough to make all sorts of trouble—and fun—on the end of a fine line with a reel attachment.

Next morning—it was just half an hour after dawn—I appeared before Marvin on the beach. He was making his matutinal observations of weather and fish. Again his eye took in my rod and reel. I told him that I was going deep-sea fishing with a fly-rod.

“Ye mean,” said he slowly, “ye’re going to ketch pollock with *that thing?*”

“Why not?”

“Lord bless you,” said Marvin, in an amused way, “that thing’d break if a sculpin even took hold.”

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"Ever see a rod and reel in action, Marvin?"

He admitted that he had never had that pleasure, but didn't think he had missed much. I tried to explain that the idea was to play a fish until it got tired.

"What for?" he demanded, in his horribly practical way. "And if ye try to haul him in that rod'll break in two, even if the *thread* don't go first."

"Marvin," said I, in despair, "take hold of that hook. Watch you don't stick yourself. Now, haul away! You try to break the rod, or the reel, or the thread, as you call it. Don't mind me—or the rod. Just pretend you're a mighty strong fish and imagine you're hooked and feeling mad about it. Now—*strike!*"

Marvin struck like some deep sea leviathan. He gave the line a mighty yank. The reel buzzed and the human fish found himself backing off without ever getting a strain on the line. When he got puzzled and tired of the game, I began to reel him

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in. Marvin, perceiving that, as a fish, he was "coming aboard," suddenly gave a quick backward leap, saying:

"Yes, but supposing I kept on going, or made a jump when you were reeling in tight?"

The rod yielded. Bz-z-z-z! went the reel, and again the strain was off. Presently Marvin gave up and "allowed" there was "something to it, but—"

"Say!" he cried. "Let's go out in the dory and see you do that with a fish."

We got out the dory. The morning was gray and still, the waters of Passamaquoddy Bay being like dull mercury. No other fishing boats were out. As this was my only way of knowing where the fish were, I asked Marvin about it.

"There ain't any fish hereabouts this morning," said he cheerfully. "The schools went up the bay during the night. They're around Casco Island this morning. That's why I'm able to come out for fun with you."

"Well! . . . How the devil am I to catch a fish if there aren't any?"

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"Lots of fish at the bottom," said Marvin.
"Ketch one."

For a moment the evacuation of the bay by the pollock fish left me downcast. But I thought for a moment and applied fresh-water sense to the situation. Fish at the bottom? They must be coaxed up. How? All I wanted was a deep-sea fish to take hold on a fly-rod. Suppose I dispensed with the fly and—

"Marvin," I said, producing a "spoon" about midway in size between a bass and a pickerel bait, "you row and I'll troll."

Marvin stared blankly. "Wa-what's that?" he asked, blinking at the little shiny, revolving spoon.

I explained as I substituted spoon for fly and cast the troll overboard.

"Row!"

Marvin rowed mechanically. It was quite clear that he was mystified by the revolving reel, the running line, and the little shimmering, fluttering thing astern. He stopped short and shouted in sudden enthusiasm:

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"Great! Great! It looks just like a *sardine*. Bet you a big fish snaps the thing right off!"

"I hope not. But if you don't row, Marvin, the spoon'll sink so deep it'll catch nothing but a ton of seaweed."

Well, Marvin rowed quietly and steadily for about fifteen minutes. We kept about fifty feet from the rocky shore. All around us little fish leaped on the surface, as if jubilant that they had Passamaquoddy all to their little selves.

At intervals the great submarine draperies clutched at the spoon, and then we had troubles. The yielding clutch of the weed was for all the world like a great fish taking a slow, sullen bite. As I was repeatedly disappointed where I had been sure of a strike, Marvin again waxed critical and cynical.

Just as I was about to give up and we were rowing the boat around a point of green, low-tide rocks, intent upon entering Calder's Cove, I got a "strike." It was quite suggestive of a young colt taking the

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lariat and backing off with sudden, spasmodic springs. Brrr!—bzzzz!—bzzzzzz! went the reel, and at each check the rod bent and bobbed like a sapling in the first gusts of a cyclone.

I remember thinking that this must be something of a fish. I had a momentary thought of some big Bay of Fundy monster of the deep-sea. There is a fascination about these big depths up there. You never know what may be on your line. Hooking a sea lion is mighty uncommon, but it is not without precedent.

"Ease up!" I yelled to Marvin. The strain on the rod and the line was heavy, and I was not willing to pay out too much, for the weeds were thick and the fish would wind the line into the submarine tangle until it would be a hopeless skein of weed, line, and fish.

"All right," said Marvin interestedly. "I dunno a thing about this, so I'll do just as you say. . . . Lord! if that tin rod don't break, *I dunno a thing!*"

The fight was on, and whatever fresh

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water enthusiasts might say to the contrary, I found enough fight in that salt-water fish to stir the most blasé sportsman to at least a passing interest. Had I been elsewhere I should have said: "It's a black bass!" for the fish's fight savored of that rocky scrapper's tactics. For every foot he yielded, he disputed six.

For five minutes he held his own at the sea bottom, with his head down, as it seemed, and determined to keep it down. Sometimes he would come up quite willingly, but this seemed only a ruse to get purchase for another and a more vicious dive. It was ten minutes before I caught sight of him. Then I saw a flash of dull gold, then a yellowish body darting athwart the stern. The main thing about his fight was his unwillingness to remain anywhere near the surface. When I finally brought him aboard, the muscles of my left arm were quite aching and yet—I found he weighed only three pounds.

"A little rock cod!" said Marvin, disgusted.

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But I was satisfied from that first experience that deep-sea fishing with a fly-rod was no "dead" game, and it also came home to me by a certain analogy that, whether in fresh or salt water, the rock dwellers of the deep, especially in the colder latitudes, are the great fighters.

But I was not satisfied. Neither was Marvin—by a long way.

"I want to see a pollock git hold," said he. "Then something's going to break."

I wanted to show Marvin that he was mistaken; I wanted to show him the power of a little science over a great deal of fishy matter. Also he had perpetrated the remark at George Byron's grocery store that "a man that takes fifteen minutes to haul in a three-pound cod—which is wormy and not good eatin' anyway—is either a fool or's got more time than need o' money."

But for days the schools of pollock did not come back to Passamaquoddy Bay. There were several false alarms. Once a cloud appeared on the surface of the water

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and Marvin and I shot out in a dinghy, only to find that it was a shoal of queer creatures that hoisted little whips over the surface. Marvin scooped in a few with the net. They were shapeless, clinging things, with numerous feelers, and when brought aboard they squirted jet-black fluid from parrot-like beaks.

"Squid," said Marvin. "They make great bait. Reck'n uncle and me'll have to get busy. The herrin's up to Casco and we need bait."

While Marvin and his uncle scooped in young octopus for bait, the pollock and the young herring remained up the bay, whence boatloads of fish were brought down every evening. A party of summer visitors went up from Campobello in a sloop. They returned with enough fish to feed a regiment, but utterly disgusted and dampened both in ardor and clothing. "Yanking" in fish as fast as one could let down a line was tiresome work after a while.

In the meantime I found contentment (when I was not hunting seal) in experi-

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menting with rock cod, catching them on a troll, or with the fly, and always getting my time's worth in fun. The native fishermen got some fun out of it—or me—too. While they were hauling in tons of fish in a few hours and with little labor, I was seemingly happy with a string of thirty-five pounds caught after many hours and infinite patience. The "tin rod with the wheel" provided the Campobellian professionals with an inexhaustible fund of amusement.

But one day my chance came. Marvin appeared about sunset, demanding an immediate audience. The schools of pollock were coming down the bay in such numbers that with the naked eye one could see dark blots—like cloud shadows—running along the surface of the sea.

"Reck'n you'll break a rod to-day!" chuckled Marvin, who was attired in his Eastport clothes. (He always dressed up when he was going "fishing for fun.")

Ten minutes later we had commandeered the first boat we found—a neat, white dinghy belonging to someone or other.

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Marvin rowed out into the bay as fast as he could scull, while I sat in the stern arranging my tackle for the fray.

We were aiming for one of the great clouds of fish where a couple of boats were already busy with the scooping-nets. My idea was to get into the thick of the school and make a cast with the fly.

But there was no need to reach a particular school. All at once the water around us became disturbed. Up from the depths came a great school of big fish—pollock.

Instantly I made a cast with the fly. It fell right into the thick of the school. Almost simultaneously the reel sang a joyous bz-z-z-z! I had hooked a pollock on a fly-rod! I remember yelling to Marvin to back water, for before I realized that a furious fish was on the end of my line, about one hundred feet had buzzed straight down into the depths. The rest of the school had passed on, leaping and splashing, leaving one wayward member learning by experience a new danger of the deep—the reel and the rod.

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Hither and thither the pollock dashed. Once it leaped out of the sea (although this is not a common trait of the pollock) and he looked a fine, big, healthy "socket." Then he dropped into his element and apparently thinking discretion the better part of valor, dived straight down until I began to fear that there would not be enough line to go round.

"What depth, Marvin?"

"'Bout fifteen—maybe sixteen fathom," said he.

"Well, back water!"

My attention was centered on the game and not for several seconds did I notice that Marvin was not obeying. I looked up impatiently, and there sat Marvin, his chin on his hands, his oars shipped, and a smile on his face. He was either interested so much that he forgot the management of the boat, or he thought it would avail nothing. Apparently he was contentedly awaiting for "something to break." The fact that the steel rod was bent like a bow and jiggling violently as the fish tugged on the checked

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reel further heightened his interest, amusement, and anticipation.

“Row!—Back!—Wake up!” I yelled.

Marvin started and obeyed, although he muttered something about not being a “horse.” As he backed the boat, the line slackened. But the pollock took the slack, with him to the bottom. Presently, with but a few feet of line on the reel and the rest dipping straight down from the arched tip of the rod to the sea bottom, Mr. Pollock and I came to a sort of deadlock. He essayed two or three vicious jerks downward in an effort to dislodge the hook, or break the line or whatever he fancied was on the end of it.

Then the fish shot away in a direction which brought the line right under the boat. Letting out a couple of feet of line—it was all I could spare—and suddenly plunging the rod tip into the sea I managed to bring the entire outfit to the other side.

“Reck’n if he does that again I can fix it,” said Marvin, waking up and getting into the game. And, true to his word, next

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time the line came under the boat, Marvin hauled off and whisked the stern around to my advantage.

Three times I had had about half of my line in, and three times the pollock—perhaps seeing the shadow of the boat on the surface—had dived again to the dark bottom waters. Marvin, his skill no longer necessary at the oars, was once more the unsympathetic critic. He sat near the bow with his legs crossed and a grin on his face, remarking at intervals and with irritating regularity:

“It’ll break in a minute.”

But at last the fish began to tire. Foot by foot it came up. I would gain three feet for every one I lost. In forty minutes from the strike, a twelve-pound pollock, slightly “logy” from over exertion and drowning, came swaying and swerving through the green upper waters. And yet it took five minutes more to get him tame enough for the scooping-net, which I had brought alongside.

When the deep-sea fish was finally landed,

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I turned inquiringly to Marvin. He looked first at the fish, then at the rod and reel of piscatorial science.

"All right," he said, holding out his hand in token of unwilling admission of *some* merit in the "tin rod with the wheel." "But," he added, "I could ha' yanked in sixteen in a quarter the time you was landing that one. The old way ketches more fish."

In justice to friend Marvin, let me admit that he afterwards had the satisfaction of seeing me break a rod. I was playing a big fellow—deep-sea fishing with a fly-rod became a daily pastime at Campobello thereafter—when one of the occasional fogs that come into Passamaquoddy Bay blew in on a southeast breeze from Fundy. In an instant we could not see a boat length around us. But we had seen Campobello Island ere the eclipse.

"Row!" I cried. "Row quick—and straight!"

I know now that there was not the slightest need for alarm. Marvin could have

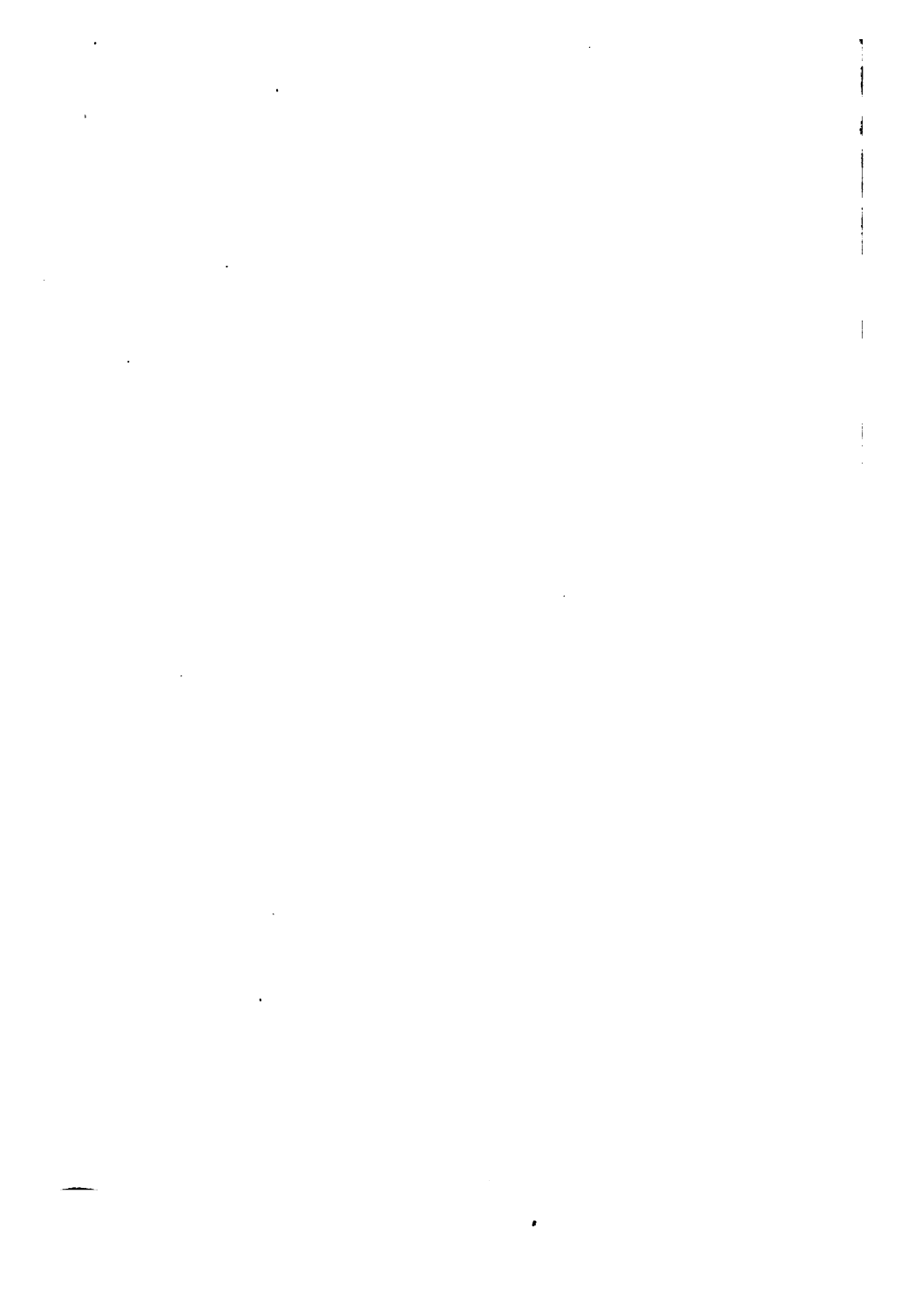
DEEP-SEA FISHING

rowed to any point through the thickest fog, the current and "the color of the water" as his compass. But Marvin, out of respect for my city alarm, rowed. And so we went through the gloom at good speed, with a lively big fellow towing on the end of a taut line.

The rod would have stood it, but when I struck the handle under the boat seat and the tugging fish bent the tip sharply upon the gunwale, there came a snap of cruelly tortured steel. Next moment line, hook, fly, and fish were gone.

"I knew it 'ud happen sooner or later," said Marvin, with a contented sigh.

When we landed, he went straight to George Byron's grocery store.



**AN EX-TENDERFOOT AND A
BUCK**

AN EX-TENDERFOOT AND A BUCK

I

THE LUMBER ROAD TO BILL'S

“**T**HAT'S a new one on me,” said the doctor. “Come again, so I can get in swipes on the chorus. Good boy!” to the horse. “Say! Just look how he eyes the corduroy. He's been at this work before.”

While the old “skate” picked a way over the corduroy road that snaked a way through the still Adirondack wilderness, we sang (swipes by the doctor):

Ole Massa had a brand-new coat,
He hung it in the hall,
A darkey stole dat coat away,
An' wore it to a ball.

THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT

Rigajig! Oh, hear him weep!
Rigajig! Oh, hear him sigh!
'Way down by the Carry-O!
De ole man kicky up an' die!

Silence, only for the beat of the old horse's hoofs on the lumber road and the cruel straining of the springs beneath the wagon, which was laden with guns, blankets, baskets, and camp miscellanies. From the distance came the sigh of a river, clear in the contrasting quiet. The great woods crept up beside, behind, and before us with a whispering stealth that had something of the sinister and ominous in it. The echo of our chorus seemed to have been suddenly engulfed in the vast throat of soundlessness.

"How long before we get there?" It seemed the appropriate question.

The doctor drew out his watch. One could distinctly hear the ticking of it and the fall of a pine cone as it ripped through the underbrush two hundred yards away.

"We left Indian Carry at nine. It's now past noon. We'll get to Bill Schrier's camp by two—easy. The river's not more than

EX-TENDERFOOT AND A BUCK

a mile now. We'll let the old skate blow there and feed. After that, here's my proposition: You'll drive—"

"Thanks—no!" as the skate put one leg in a gap between the corduroy logs. "You hired the plug."

"That's all right," said the doctor. The plug drew its leg out, very deliberately, and proceeded, eying the corduroy and with its ears cocked intelligently. "It takes either fine driving or no driving at all. Now, don't you try to drive! Just stand by to hold up the old skate on the downhill and to tell him when he's picking out safe bits what a fine old plug-of-a-horse you think he is."

"What are you going to do?—go home?"

"No, sir—not for one whole week, and not until we have at least as much venison as this wagon'll hold. But this is a fine country and there's deer galore. I'll take a half-mile start—just enough to be out of earshot of the wheels. Can't expect a deer to stand for this racket. In the meantime, that's a fine song—quite a new one on me.

THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT

Draw out the 'weep' and the 'sigh' more.
That's where I get in the fine swipes.
Let'er go, professor!"

Ole Massa had a brand-new coat,
He hung it in the hall—etc., etc.

We reached the river. I forget the name of it. It was a wide, rapid, ponded, trouty-looking thing with a broken-down bridge which was suggestive of vernal floods.

We smoked and ate apples while we smoked, and the iron-ribbed, steel-sinewed plug put away a few quarts of bran. Then the doctor pumped in a cartridge and went ahead, leaving me the task of fording an uncertain river with an uncertain old horse and a wagon with one wheel half dished.

"If you have a breakdown," said the doctor cheerfully, "fire your revolver." He walked about ten paces, balancing himself upon the logs of the twisted old bridge. "If I don't answer, fire your rifle once or twice." Before he disappeared around a bend of the trail on the other side of the river, he called back over his shoulder: "If

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"If I Don't Answer, Fire Your Rifle Twice."

that don't work, fire both barrels of your
shotgun together. Getting no answer to
that, you'll know I'm dead and that you

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might as well go back home. So long!"

I gave him about twenty minutes; then I hitched up and started after him. Thanks to the apparent prior experience of that old skate—he was a Saranac livery horse, too old and inelegant for carriage service but still with a lot of "go" in him—I forded that river successfully, even if the starboard wheel struck a reef that nearly laid the wilderness schooner on her port beam.

Presently, as I came into the dim wilderness trail again, I realized more than ever the desolation of the Adirondack forest. Blighted tamaracks seemed specters; birches were gray ghosts of trees that had lived long ago; but all the others seemed as living, moving, whispering denizens of a dark domain. It was broad daylight—an autumn afternoon—yet here there was no sun. The moisture of a hundred miles of forest hung between earth and sky. It was a land that was at once depressing to the soul, inviting to the imagination, and stimulating to the red heart. It was a place for men of brawn and little imagination.

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Imagination was unnecessary here and, like conscience, an uneasy companion.

The old skate, however, occupied thinking to the exclusion of imaginative superfluities. The corduroy, which had previously been intermittent, was now almost chronic. There would be a seemingly impossible hill to climb. The skate would cross the corduroy, look up at the hill, and come to a standstill and blow.

"He's all in," was the invariable thought. "Suppose the doctor is too far ahead to hear my signal and I'm shipwrecked twenty miles from the railway," which, in the Adirondack woods, is as bad as being cast away on an uninhabited island off the track of steamships. The experienced horse, however, was merely acting independently of an inexperienced driver. He would "size up" the hill, make a dash at it, arrive at the top, stop and blow, *slide* down the other side of the ridge, strike the valley corduroy again, and pick his way over it with the air of a dandy crossing a muddy street.

THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT

He was a wonder, that old skate! When the driver thought to correct him with the whip or the rein, he would toss his head disgustedly as if to say:

“Aw, tie the reins to the whip and give both a rest!”

Once—just once on the lumber road to Bill’s—the arms of the ghoulis wilderness seemed to reach out and clutch. That was when I arrived at a point where the lumber road branched into two. Which was the main road? By which had the doctor traveled? Suppose—!

Then I fell to wondering if, in watching that skate’s legs and the gaps in the interminable corduroy, I had not previously passed similar branches. At once there arose a picture of myself, driving an ancient nag and a weather-beaten, spring-groaning wagon through a mazy labyrinth of Adirondack lumber roads, all absolutely alike and all coming back to a river which was just like every other stream of the woods.

When my eyes fell on a stake with an apple core stuck on top of it, the relief was

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momentarily awful. I followed the sign and—it may as well be admitted—whipped up that old skate. It was time the doctor took a hand in this game of bumping the bumps and having the terror of the big wilderness walking at one's side.

I found him—quite suddenly—sitting on a stump by the side of the lumber road. His voice seemed to boom through the woods, although he spoke quite quietly:

“Lord! I could hear that old plug hitting the corduroy a mile away. *Isn't it deathly still?*”

The doctor had had two hours of still hunting. Now it was his turn at the lonesome driving. For two hours I forged ahead on foot—about half a mile ahead—without raising anything but a partridge, which, incidentally, I missed. What the doctor had said about the stillness and “the plug hitting the corduroy” was true. I could feel one and hear the other. There was little chance of coming upon a deer track that was less than twenty minutes old.

Still, I walked ahead. It was pleasanter

THE TRAIL OF A TENDERFOOT

walking alone than driving that wagon up perpendicular hills and down rocky abysses, with corduroy between. Besides, the doctor's full shift with the wagon ought to bring us to Bill Schrier's camp—our destination.

About two o'clock I suddenly emerged from dense wilderness into a vast clearing in a valley surrounded by forest-clad hills. I could see a river, black or foam-white, rushing by many a bend. At the foot of the lumber road, not a hundred yards from me, were several log houses. From the roof pipe of one arose a stream of straight-ascending, blue smoke. In front of this log house sat a white-haired, square-built old man. He was shaping a piece of wood with an ax.

I hailed him. He looked up without surprise, which surprised me. To the ordinary person a stranger walking into a camp set in the middle of a land Adam never visited might have stirred at least momentary astonishment.

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"Hullo," said the old man coolly. "Glad to see you. Forget your name for the minute, but weren't you at the Carry last fall?"

"Yes," said I, and conscience bade me add, once and for all, "I was the Tenderfoot. Remember?"

"Sure," said he, with a faint smile. "Well, you won't be so tender this time. Who's coming behind in the wagon? I've been listening to it for the last ten minutes. The doctor? I'll be glad to see him, too. Bill's out looking for meat. Heard him fire once, about an hour ago, somewhere up Spruce Bend way. Probably got something. I'll get dinner, anyway. I'm Jones—Old Man Jones. Make yourself to home."

Old Man Jones smiled—the smile that makes people "to home" right away. He picked up a piece of iron bar and beat a peculiar tattoo upon an old iron wagon tire that hung from a projecting log on the house end. The sound of this crude but

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mighty gong boomed and echoed miles and miles over the wilderness. From a short distance came a halloo and the rattle of half-dished wheels.

"That's the doctor with his wagon," said Old Man Jones.

From a farther and opposite distance came two rifle shots in rapid succession.

"That's Bill," said Old Man Jones. "Bill knows a tune on the wheel means 'comp'ny to dinner.' Fine weather for huntin'."

II

DEER HUNTING WITH POKER CHIPS

Bill Schrier and Old Man Jones were guides—real guides—very unlike the guides the Tenderfoot met during the season when he came to the Adirondacks with a brand-new gun and a notion that he was the reincarnation of one Boone, a considerable hunter. Neither Bill nor the Old Man had much use for tenderfeet.

A type of the gentle lion that is reared

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in the wilderness was Old Man Jones. White-haired though he was, his constitution was of iron and his disposition of sugar. He had the blessed faculty of making strangers "to home" with him at once.



Came Out on a Vast Clearing in the Wilderness.

To the green man in the woods he was kindly, patient, and sympathetic. Although he hated to guide a tenderfoot, he never missed a chance of taking out the greenest man in the party—just out of the goodness of his big heart—and teaching him all he could in the limited time.

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Bill Schrier was of another wilderness type. As Old Man Jones suggested the gentle lion, Bill impressed one as a sort of playful tiger. Sinewy, lank, and bony, his strength and powers of endurance were almost superhuman. I have heard him, after a day's hunt, offer to wrestle with any man in the camp. Failing a taker, he would "raise the roof" out of sheer physical exuberance.

We slept that night upon beds of straw with overcoats for blankets. The roughest kind of a pillow was luxury compared with that where one's sweater tickled an unshaven face and straw-ends were titillating the nose and ears. But out there in the cool, clean, crisp air of the forest, the very primitiveness of the bed and the odor of undressed logs and clean straw lulled the brain to a sleep deeper and sweeter than was ever produced by any drug known to medical science.

At first dawn the sleepers were startlingly awakened. The high-spirited Bill was hitting the wagon tire in a way that made

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its resonance vibrate through the very timbers of the log house. He supplemented the gong with an ear-splitting whoop. By lamplight we dressed. Old Man Jones made coffee, while Bill tied up four lunch packages, each to be hung by a string loop to the belt. Before the light was enough to read a newspaper by, we were off on the cool, moist trail for a day's hunting.

At the log bridge spanning Roaring Brook, we separated, Old Man Jones and I taking a branch trail. The last we saw of Bill and the doctor they were vanishing up the main lumber road at a business-like gait.

"They'll bring back a deer to-day," said Old Man Jones, plodding softly ahead, brushing the long grass back with his right hand and letting it come together softly behind him. "You can talk all you want," said he, noticing my spasmodic silences. "Only, never raise your voice. You soon get in the way of it, and your voice don't carry. In fact, if you talk in a certain way deer will even come out to find out what it

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is. Some kinds of talking sound just like running water to them. . . .

“By the way, if you scare up a deer, raise your voice and cry, ‘Hey!’ No matter how fast a deer may be going, it’ll stop dead in its tracks at that. That’s a solemn fact. I do it all the time. So does Bill. Only for a second, mind you. Fire quick, or he’s gone again like a streak. A deer will stop at the unexpected—just to place where the danger is, or where the sound comes from.”

Some days later, while wandering in the woods in a sort of day dream, I raised a deer. I saw the tawny body and the under white of the tail for a moment, but the dream was still upon me and that deer was moving like an express train. After it had vanished and the far, faint rustling of its passage was the remotest tenuity of sound, I put my rifle against a tree, cried “Hey!” and laughed as heartily as I ever did.

That day’s hunt resulted in nothing but some pleasant hours spent with a fine old

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man of the woods. At the end of it I was better pleased than if I had landed eight prongs. There are worse things than a clear fall day in the Adirondack woods, an unobtrusive companion, a few pleasant things to think about, a piece of clean, pure, spruce gum to chew, and always the chance of a sudden shot.

The doctor and Bill came into camp after dark and reported a young buck early in the day.

"What does your buck weigh?" asked Old Man Jones, suspending his boots by their laces over the stove.

"Well, it isn't what you'd call a *la-arge* buck," began the doctor, "but—"

"Aw, 'bout seventy-five pounds," interrupted Bill, with jarring terseness.

"Get another one just like it to-morrow," said Old Man Jones, "and we'll show you one that'll weigh more'n both of 'em together."

I wonder was it prescience in that old man?

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"Let's play penny-ante," said Bill, who was oddly sensitive about that seventy-five-pound buck.

We played poker after supper. I have been in some queer games. In particular might be mentioned one wherein the police laid side-bets over the gamblers' shoulders. But for sheer picturesqueness, that little game at Bill Schrier's camp was "the limit"—raised!

It was Bill who started it. Although he began the game by way of getting off the subject of that little buck, his mind was still running upon deer. The doctor's tongue, too, was rippling along the line of "tracks," "ridges," "bucks," "runways," "flying shots," and all the rest of the vernacular.

Anyhow, Bill suggested a "jackpot" and put up a 30-30 cartridge as the "jack." He looked at his first hand and said right away he would "stand pat in this valley" and let the other fellows "scare a deer" right on to him. The other fellows did.

"My deer," said Bill, raking in the chips. "But," with a wink at the doctor and a grin

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at Old Man Jones, "that was just a little fellow. I'll get another just like it, then Jonesey will show us one weighin' more'n the two of 'em together!"

After that jab the whole poker game was a deer hunt with chips.

"Well, it's a flying shot," Old Man Jones would sigh, drawing one card to a vain flush. "N-n-no-o-o! Guess he went by me 't' other side of the ridge."

Bill and the doctor, "'t' other side of the ridge," seemed to be getting all the game. Old Man Jones suddenly said to me:

"This won't do. We've got to make a drive, son. The trail's too noisy for still huntin'. Let's get together on this."

He arose, crossed the room to his duffel, procured one of his own rifle cartridges, and presently displaced Bill's 30-30 with a 32 special shell.

"Now watch the luck change," said he, taking up the fresh-dealt hand with a broad smile.

The luck turned, but not in Old Man Jones's direction. I got it all—pot after

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pot! There was a sudden objection raised by the doctor, Bill, and particularly by Old Man Jones about the latter's choice of a "jack." It was the Old Man who insisted that it be superseded by one of my own shells.

It was a 38-55 and it went straight to Old Man Jones's corner. He immediately offered to barter his 30-30 for my 38-55 rifle. When I took him up he changed his mind suddenly. That rifle of his had a shotgun stock and Old Man Jones had had it specially made for him. He couldn't shoot straight enough with a rifle-stocked weapon!

"Guess not!" said he, looking at the pot he had taken. It had no more than thirty cents in it. "When I look at this pot it comes to my mind that a 38-55 is a mighty poor argument in deer-hunting. However, it killed a *little dough* first crack out of the barrel. I'll try it again."

He did and lost, whereat Bill, who had been nervously nosing around his hand for tracks, put back the 30-30 with a decision

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that was as mysterious as it was sudden.
He played hard and high and—lost!

“Slunk right by and went down the hollow!” yelled Bill, throwing his cards all over the floor.

Presently we all crept to our straw beds. As the doctor took off his boots—the only nocturnal preparations indulged in—he said to me:

“Well, I hope *you* have a bit of luck to-morrow.”

Of course, the doctor had no more idea than Old Man Jones about what was going to befall me—to-morrow.

III

THE BUCK THAT CAME TO LIFE!

Now, here is the truth of that buck story.* Both Bill Schrier and Old Man Jones warned me that it would never be

* This “buck story” was the subject of a press dispatch printed in all the prominent newspapers from New York to San Francisco. In this place Mr. Chalmers himself describes exactly what happened.

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credited, hence it has never been written by me before.

It was the second day of our hunt. Tired of vain deer-stalking I had gone out armed with a shotgun in the hope of getting a few partridges. The forenoon had resulted in nothing—nothing, at least, for me but an unpleasant encounter with that arch-terror of the woods—lost bearings. Old Man Jones and I had separated. There was only a little ridge between us, and we were moving, as I thought, on parallel courses. I had some little difficulty with fallen trees and may have made several excursions to avoid them, and in so doing slightly changed my course.

Suddenly the ridge melted away and I found myself in swampy ground, barricaded shoulder-high with moss-covered, rotting logs and shut out from the sunlight by a thick jungle of young growth. I pushed ahead for a hundred yards or two, but the swamp became worse, the barricade of fallen trunks more obstructing, and the dim light more horribly depressing. I stopped and

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whistled, supposing that I would get a reply at once from Old Man Jones. None came. I whistled several times. Still no reply.

Then, having taken little heed of our bearings while with the guide, the terror rushed in upon me just as it did one memorable time on my first hunt. All the confidence of the would-be experienced huntsman forsook me. The dim light seemed to grow darker; the silence of that swamp became all at once sinisterly suggestive of omen, and the moss-grown, slimy logs were as things that had been throttled and cast recklessly aside by some invisible, relentless giant.

The momentary impulse to run was strong. Also there was a desire to yell—yell and run—anywhere—anyhow! But there was also a memory of a guide's advice to those about to lose their nerve under just such circumstances:

"Don't run. Keep cool. Think, and advance slowly. Be patient, and if finally the lay of the land don't come out right, sit

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down and fire your gun three times in quick succession."

I braced myself, thought, and advanced slowly, bearing a little to the left so as to bring my course across Old Man Jones's late parallel. I kept at it for about fifteen minutes, ever checking the impulse to take to my heels and only half-ashamed of the sweat that was trickling down the small of my back. Also, there was running in my mind a story, wherein is depicted all the horrors of a man lost in the wilderness and coming back after days to the point where he began his frantic search for a way out!

Convinced at last that I had either lost my bearings completely or crossed Old Man Jones's trail unknowingly and walked right into the labyrinth of trackless wilderness, forced to admit to myself that the ex-tenderfoot was as tender as ever, I was preparing to confess it with three shots from my gun, when there came a rustle of the bushes almost beside me and a quiet voice said:

"See anything?"

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It was Old Man Jones. He had come upon me just as I was raising my shotgun to fire.

"Hullo!" I said. "I—I heard you. Thought—I thought maybe it was a deer!"

"Never fire till you see what you're firing at," said Old Man Jones, and he walked on without another word, which convinced me, somehow, that *he knew!*

We reached a rendezvous at a burned lumber camp about noon, ate luncheon with the doctor and Bill, smoked and loafed until the sun was getting down toward the western forest, then started on the hunt again.

It was several miles to our home camp. As the morning had been rather strenuous (for me, at least) Old Man Jones suggested that we travel homeward by a different route, going slowly and quietly.

"Like as not we'll raise a deer about sundown," said he.

Bill and the doctor went off over new ground. About sundown Old Man Jones and I reached the top of the ridge of hills which walled in our lumber camp. We sat

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on a log on the western side of a high knoll, called Burnt Hill, and smoked a pipe before descending the remaining mile and a half to the camp.

"Suppose you go down the north side of the ridge yourself," said Old Man Jones. "You'll strike a lumber road. Follow it and you'll come to the camp. You can't help arriving there. I'll go another way and meet you there. I may chase a deer over to your side."

As I was leaving him, he called out to me:

"You didn't bring a compass. Take this one and use it if you happen to leave the lumber trail after a deer. Watch the dark. It comes quick in the woods."

Ten minutes after I left him I was walking slowly down the lumber trail. Suddenly there came from near by and with startling distinctness in the still, clear air, a sound as of a small boy practicing a newly discovered faculty for whistling.

"Phwee! Phweuff! Phwee!"

It was half-cough, half-whistle. With it

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there came a crashing of bushes and a stamping of hoofs, but the author of the noises was hidden around a bend of the trail. I crept forward quickly and quietly, with my shotgun ready. I was sorry now that I had not brought the rifle, but 'twas ever thus!

The sounds died away as I approached the bend. But when I arrived where I could get a view of the next vista, I was not disappointed altogether. I saw, at a distance of about three hundred yards and on a ridge to my left, a deer. Apparently it had been scared up by Old Man Jones in his passage down the other side.

It might have been a doe or a spike-horn buck, but the light was dim and I could only be sure that it was a good-sized bit of venison. Still, it was too far away for the shotgun. The game scented me and darted down the ridge, across the lumber trail, and into the woods to the right.

I made good time to the point where the deer disappeared. Its trail was very distinct and its course was diagonally to the

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right and not much at a tangent from my own forward course. The light was still good enough for a little tracking. I took my bearings from Old Man Jones's compass and went into the woods. For about ten minutes I followed that trail. It presently curved and seemed to head back to recross the lumber road.

It was while I was taking my bearings again that I noticed the sudden darkness of the woods after sunset. Having had enough of wilderness terror for one day, I decided that the safest course was to double back on my own (and the deer's) tracks as far as the lumber road and keep on as I had been going at first. If the deer was heading toward the road lower down, I might come upon it in the better light of the open slash on each side of the lumber trail.

In a little while I was within six hundred yards of the camp. By this time I had given up all hope of seeing my deer again. The trail dipped into a hollow, then climbed the last ridge this side of the brook and the

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log house. The moment I reached the top of this ridge and looked down into the wide slashing, I saw that deer again!

The deer saw me, too. It darted a rod or two to the right and came to a stand-still as I had already done. Apparently it was watching me, as I was watching it. In the dim, hazy light I could see only the white splash of the throat and the faint tan of the head above. Whether the animal was horned or not, it was impossible to judge. The distance seemed about one hundred and thirty yards—a long shot even for the left barrel.

But it was a chance—the first, last, and only chance. I dropped on one knee, sighted carefully at that dim head and emptied the left barrel. That deer just dropped where it had stood! Scarcely able to credit the evidence of my own eyes, I ran down the ridge side, plunged into the slashing, and presently found the deer lying in the dusk at the base of the stump.

Absent-minded from elation, I leaned my gun against a nearby tree and went to have

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a good look at my game. Two things I noticed at once: first, that it was a fat young buck with little sharp, branching antlers, and, second, that it was breathing with remarkable steadiness for a creature that had collapsed the moment the shot was fired. From a wound in the left temple blood was trickling. According to all precedent that deer should have been dead, for apparently one double-O buckshot had plowed through the left temple and lodged in the brain. An after-examination, however, proved that the buck was merely stunned. The shot only grazed the skull, lodging under the skin at the base of the right antler.

I felt for my hunting knife and was convinced on the instant that I was still very much of a tenderfoot. I had left the knife at the lumber camp after cutting up a plug of tobacco! To fire the right barrel of a shotgun into a deer at close quarters is neither sport nor economy of meat and hide, but I had no knife, and that deer was beginning to breathe even more steadily.

While I was still thinking over the prob-

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lem of what to do, that buck suddenly came alive—very much alive! It seemed all at



The Tug of War.

once to rebound from the earth like a thing made of rubber. For a second or two it stood there on four widely planted legs,

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looking at me with as much astonishment, probably, as I felt over its sudden resurrection.

Obedying an impulse, having laid aside the gun and possessing no other weapon, I grabbed the buck by the horns. It was the impulse of a man who would detain another to gain time. I do not know to this day whether that deer knew I was the two-footed enemy, or thought I was merely an entangling bush. Certain it is that he at once began to back off, trying the while to shake the encumbrance from his horns. I think he was still a bit dazed from the shock of that glancing pellet.

Presently he plunged forward, so suddenly that the sharp points of his antlers punctured my right hand. A little excitement and a little pain are marvelous stimulants. I lost my temper about the same time that buck did.

It was now almost dark. For the next ten minutes the brightening stars were the only witnesses of a man and a buck playing tug-o'-war in the heart of the Adiron-

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dack wilderness. The buck had the best of it every way, except that I held on to his horns and refused to let go. Finally, when the animal was recovering his lithe, nervous strength and I was losing what little I possessed, I tried the simple expedient of abruptly twisting my adversary's neck.

The result was the usual one. In trying to save his neck, the buck threw himself. Next moment we were both a tumbled, violent heap on the ground, the deer's weight having taken me off my feet, too.

Up to this time there had seemed to be no special danger in my situation, but the moment I struck the ground a long, razor-hoofed limb shot forward from the buck's hind - quarter. The close - drawn hoof whizzed past my cheek, struck me on the shoulder, and nearly took my sweater away.

A second "swipe" found me on guard, with my head thrown back and to the safe side. Then the animal attempted to get up. A twist of the head brought him over on his back. For a second I saw a white belly and four slender legs that were stabbing the

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air. Then the buck settled down on his left side to steady pawing.

For about five minutes this kept up. My strength was at its last ebb. I had managed to get the buck's head turned over in some way (not clear to me yet) and he was snoring stertorously through a half-throttled windpipe. It was then I discovered the gun leaning against the tree, almost within reach of my hand, and by this time I had got over my scruple, or indecision, about firing that right barrel.

I let go one hand, reached for the shotgun, and was back with all my weight just as the deer attempted to release its doubled-in neck. I think I may say that that buck was handicapped in much the same way a powerful horse is when there is a small boy sitting on its head. In this delicate description I convey the hint that I am neither large nor heavy of build.

For this very reason I could no longer withstand the buck's efforts to throw me off. Neither could I operate the shotgun with one hand. Without remembering, or

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thinking to remember, whether the weapon was "safe" (it was, as it ought always to be between shots), I clubbed the shotgun and brought it down with all its own weight and leverage upon the deer's head.

The stock broke off right behind the lock, carrying the trigger-guard with it! But the blow quieted that buck for a moment. I staggered to my feet and a few steps backward with the shattered weapon in my hand. My nerves and muscles were all high-diddle-diddle from exhaustion, and there was hardly a cubic inch of air left in my lungs.

The buck struggled and showed signs of returning vitality. What now? I was ready to fire, but—I could not put the gun to my shoulder, and I would have been afraid to fire the shattered thing so close to my face. Perhaps the gun would not fire at all! Perhaps it would blow up!

The buck struggled halfway to its feet. I remember leveling a piece of gun at a white-splashed space between two *standing* forelegs—leveling two steel barrels from

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my hips and with my face averted. I pulled the trigger of the right barrel. The broken gun went off. The lock was all right. The buck gently collapsed and rolled over on his side.

IV

AFTER THE FRAY

Twenty minutes later, Old Man Jones, who was frying potatoes in the log house, saw me in the doorway.

"You were the sweetest picture I ever saw," said he, afterwards. "There was blood on your hands and blood on your face."—I had thoughtlessly wiped my brow with a wounded hand.—"You looked as if you had fallen into the river, then dried yourself by rolling in the mud. And that blamed gun of yours was like as if it had been caught between logs at the bottom of a skid!"

It was long after dark when the doctor and Bill arrived. They reported "another

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just like it." That is to say, they had killed another small buck.

"Now!" cried Bill, banging his fist on the table, "show us that buck weighing more'n both of 'em together!"

"Sure," said Old Man Jones, turning a venison steak with a deft twist of his knife. "Suppose we wait till after supper? Then you and the doctor can give us a hand to tote him in."

"Bluff!" yelled Bill.

"No, 'tain't," said Old Man Jones. "Leastways, I haven't seen the buck, but I've seen enough to satisfy me. Ain't that a pretty mess?" he added, passing over the twisted shotgun.

Bill Schrier looked at the gun, glowered at Old Man Jones, and glared at me. Then, over supper, the story was begun. Before it was fairly under way, Bill suddenly gulped into his coffee mug and had a fit of some sort that lasted nearly five minutes. My warm suggestion that we take a hurricane lamp and "go-look-see" seemed to aggravate his trouble.

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"Don't tell me!" he roared. "Why, man, a tame fawn got away down at Rustic Lodge last summer. Skinny George went out to bring it in. Skinny came back without the fawn. He came back without a stitch of clo'es on his back. A tame *fawn!*—d'y'hear?—*tame!* Ripped the very shirt off him!"

Old Man Jones looked worried, but the deer had to be dressed that night. He and I went out into the night with a hurricane lamp, crossed the brook, and, after some meandering in the dark, found the buck. Old Man Jones looked it all over, examined the blood-stained, hair-strewn, clawed-up ground all around. Then he said:

"As George Johnson would say—'BY CRIPES! That's the goldarn'dest thing I ever hear tell of.' A hundred and seventy-five pounds if he's an ounce. Tenderfoot's luck—I mean, it's lucky you wasn't torn to bits."

We dressed the buck. Next morning we came out and toted him into camp—after Old Man Jones had climbed the ridge and

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found an empty shell, which he stowed away in his pocket. Bill, after a solemn conclave with Old Man Jones, offered to shake hands.

"But I'm mighty sorry for you," said he. "There's been so many woolly yarns that weren't true come out of the woods that the woolliest one, that happens to *be* true, won't be swallowed short of the eighteenth whisky."

At the end of the week, with no further luck, the doctor and I hitched up the old skate to a wagon laden with over three hundred pounds of venison, our two selves, and our duffel and hit the corduroy road once more.

It had rained for two days. One of our wheels was almost dished and it was boarded and wired against probable emergency. The rain turned to wet snow that day and it took us six hours to get out of the lumber road to the State road. When we struck the latter, about fifteen miles north of Saranac Lake, the world was white; so were we, the wagon, the skate, and the deer. But we were out of the woods, and to-night we

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would be shaved and tucked away between linen sheets.

The last part of the road to Saranac Lake was covered in silence—the silence of darkness and heavy snow. But when the electric lights of the snug little Adirondack metropolis greeted us from the shore of the lake, the doctor suddenly stirred, cleared his throat, and piped up:

Ole Massa had a brand-new coat,
He hung it in the hall,
A darkey stole dat coat away,
An' wore it to a ball.

Rigajig! Oh, hear him weep!
Rigajig! Oh, hear him sigh!
'Way dao-o-o-own by the Carry-O-o-o-oh
De ole man kicky up an' die!

“Well,” said the doctor, “it’s been a bully trip!”

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I

THE WOULD-NOT-BE TOURIST

DID you ever try anything a second time, when you were aglow with the memory of the joys of that first time?—returning, for instance, to a certain hillside where you once had a beautiful day dream, or going back to the spot where you caught your first “big fellow,” or creeping stealthily once more around the bend where you got your first deer?

It usually spells disillusion. You can't force a repetition of those things. Even a perfectly simple picnic cannot be the same a second time, although planned similarly to the last detail. The accident of the moment and the mood is missing.

That first time which was such a memorable success was only the accident of the

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man, the moment, and the mood. (By the man I mean the company.) Get the same company together, at the same place, under the same conditions, on the same day of the year, with the same weather, the same duffel, with the same abandoned determination to have a great time, and—somehow it doesn't seem to come out right. It isn't quite the same.

"If we could just get together again at Rio Bueno—the same bunch," said Willis, when I met him on narrow Broadway the other day.

We looked straight into each other's eyes. For a few moments I don't think either of us was aware of the other's civilized attire, or of the passing crowds; we didn't hear (for just the flurry of a few seconds) the noise of the cars and the automobiles.

There passed between us a kaleidoscopic flash—of the big, yawning tropic skies, the big, sighing indigo Caribbean, the curving line of breakers on the crescent white beach, the curving line of cocoanut palms behind, and behind that again the parallel curving

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line of huts and crumbling, Spanish-built houses at Rio Bueno.

It was a moving picture of the mind, wherein four otherwise respectable savages moved in pajamas for a week along with Mitch-chell, the naked black man, Sam Chung, the Chinese whom Willis tried to assassinate, and the Portuguese in the yard-wide pith hat who smoked lavender mixed in his tobacco and borrowed Willis's suitcase to take home his winnings from a unique small game.

But it was just for a moment or two. Then we were back on Broadway, each knowing that it couldn't be the same again. Perhaps Mitch-chell, the black guide, had grown mercenary; perhaps the Portuguese had put aside the big pith hat, or no longer smoked lavender; perhaps somebody had built a hotel there, or somebody had taken away the Spanish guns from the rocky head. It wouldn't be the same again. But I promised Willis and myself and the other two "savages" of that week that at least we would live it over again—on paper.

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It was unusual from the beginning. I was stationed at a hill town in the island of Jamaica, waiting for earthquakes and other things that are interesting to newspaper readers. One day a square-built young man, American at a glance, came up the steps of the bungalow carrying a suitcase. Although I had never seen him before, it was apparent that he had come to stay.

"I've got a few letters of introduction to you," said he, calmly handing me the suitcase. "If you'll empty them out I can use the suitcase to bring up some things from the hotel."

I opened the suitcase. It was full of letters, done up in package sections, each with a rubber band around it. It was a gentle joke on me, of course, and all the way from far Broadway. One man had carried it to the extent of manifolding his introduction of Willis in sixteen carbon copies.

I read between thirty and forty letters; then decided that Willis was all right, that he must be treated all right, although one

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introduction said that the writer knew only two things about the man:

“(1) He has never been in jail. (2) I don't know why!”

When I asked Willis about it he said he had never been in the West Indies, at least, but that he wanted to see West Indian life and get away from the beaten track of the ordinary tourist.

“I leave it to you,” said he. “But just get me away from the sight of a crash suit, a pink parasol, and a folder on ‘Points of Interest.’”

I took him to my friend, the Jamaican, and together we took him to our mutual friend, the Planter. The Planter, the Jamaican, and I put our heads together. And this is what happened:

Next morning two rigs were on the road from that hill town traveling toward the north coast of the island. The rigs looked like armored prairie schooners, for they were packed with kit and from each side of each rig appeared the elevated barrel of a shot-

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gun, loaded and cocked; and at intervals a gun blazed at a wild pigeon or a mongoose. The mules were used to it.

Inside the rigs were four savages in out-ing warpaint and on the way to the happy hunting ground that we had decided upon. The American said it was "great" already; the Jamaican said, "But wait!" and the Planter sang a line or two of "Good-bye—Sum-mer" with much frenzy.

Presently we came to the brow of the last row of foothills and could look down from a zig-zag road upon five miles of wooded slopes. The slopes were like the train of some green-gold gown that flowed to the velvety blue carpet of the sea.

It was a great sight of the most historic coast in or around the Spanish Main. Directly below us, half-buried in the beach palms, was Ocho Rios, where Don Sasi, the last Spanish governor, escaped in a canoe to Cuba. Away to the right was St. Ann's Bay, the old Santa Gloria of Columbus and the port of that first metropolis of the Spanish new world, Seville d'Oro—the Golden

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Seville! Away to the left was Dry Harbor, itself full of tales of the adventurous Christopher, and beyond that, hidden behind a headland, was Rio Bueno, our destination, with its tarponned river mouth, its deep-sea fishing, its pigeon shooting, its Sam Chung, and its lavender-smoking Portuguese.

Half way down the green-gold trail the road branched off and we took the way to Dry Harbor. Arrived there, the Planter mixed the punch that has been called after his kind since the dawn of the era of juicy West Indian limes, sugar-cane, and the products of both.

One of sour and two of sweet;
Three of strong and four of weak.

Bad rhyme, perhaps, but good punch! Then, having struck the coast, we traveled east by cove and headland, always with the palms above us and the sea beneath, and sometimes with the breeze lifting the break-tips and spraying us with cold salt.

About noon we surmounted the high

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headland that hid Rio Bueno and shut it out from even this little island world. Willis nosed the air instantly and smelled sport. Down through a startlingly precipitous gorge, six hundred feet below us, a swift river roared through groves of palms and bananas, boulders and cassava fields. As it approached the bay of Rio Bueno it widened, and there its quieter, less confined waters suggested (even at this distance) large fish, wild duck, and things. Every now and then a white-wing or a baldpate pigeon—fat with mountain berries—darted up from the cool swamps of the estuary.

“They’ll come down again from the high lands to the swamp at dusk,” said the Planter. “Then—”

As he warbled “My sweetheart’s locks are golden-brown,” we rumbled and clattered across a bridge. A few minutes later we drew up before a ram-shackle, wind-twisted, earthquake-racked wooden building. We were in Rio Bueno.

At first glance, it was like an illustration

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of some South Sea island "beach." There was only one street and houses on only one side of it. The other side was a shady line of cocoanut palms, a glaring belt of sand, and a glittering expanse of sea that seemed ever crouching and ever trying to climb over an outside barrier reef, but which never struck the shore with more than a playful breaker.

Willis climbed out of the rig, detached himself from us and a handful of welcoming negroes, and nosed the air again. He surveyed the row of weather-torn huts and houses, glanced over the half-savage figures of the half-savage blacks, took in Sam Chung as he smoked a long pipe on the step of his salt-fish, rum, and cracker emporium and the more solid figure of the Portuguese with the yard-wide pith hat. The Portuguese had given us a curt nod from his stand on the beach by a cocoanut palm where he was studying the sea and smoking tobacco mixed with lavender sprigs.

"Say!" cried Willis, like one about to de-

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liver himself of a decision. "This looks good to me. Let's go fishing—right away!"

"Mitch-chell!" cried the practical Jamaican, singing out to a negro who wore eighteen vari-colored patches and a piece of straw hat. "Tell Old Missus to hurry up salt-fish and akee, roast breadfruit, *afu* yam, and coffee for—enough for *eight*!"

"And get some limes," said the Planter, adding as an afterthought, "and squeeze 'em!"

II

SNAPPERS, SNOOKS, AND BANANAS

Willis was disgusted. He wanted to test the sporting possibilities of Rio Bueno at once—right away—without delay! But when the "national stand-by" of the West Indian larder—salt-fish and akees, cooked with cocoanut oil—was laid before him, he forgot fishing for fully half an hour.

Fifteen minutes more may be added for his interest in *afu* (yellow) yam and ten more for roasted breadfruit stuffed with

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butter that melted and soaked into the delicious stuff. Allowing, also, five minutes for his remarks on this new fare, it was a full hour before he really thought again about that broad estuary where the deep waters circled, battled, and mingled with the sea and where the tarpon, snook, and jack lay close by the bottom of the shadowy, cool water holes.

"But we can't come with you to-day," said the Jamaican, while the Planter nodded regretfully. "We're in the banana business and we're buying to-day. We've got to have five thousand stems—that is, bunches—before the steamer comes to-morrow morning at daylight."

"It'll be a lively night," said the Planter, "for the rival company—that's the Portuguese with the big hat—is buying too. The niggers come out of the hills to-night with their fruit on donkey's backs, and they take some jollying. Who jollies best, buys best. Tell you what! This little hole will be humming like one of your frontier gold camps before midnight."

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"But that's no reason why you fellows can't go fishing," put in the Jamaican. "Take along Mitch-chell. He knows about everything, and if you ask him something he doesn't know about, he'll at least tell you an interesting lie!"

While the sun was still blazing hot we took our rods and started for the river, headed by Mitch-chell. His name, we found, was Mitchell, but after the native manner of splitting syllables (and sometimes vowels), it had become Mitch-chell. As we followed him along the street, he explained our whyness, whenceness, and whitherness to all the loafing children of the sun who inquired of him.

"De big gemman from ober-seas," said he in his quaint dialect, shouting the information to a negro loungee, much to Willis's disgust, "an' him gwine stay fah week. We gwine fishin' dis present minnit. De li'l gemman," he continued, referring to me, "me no know 'bout he." He looked over his shoulder and surveyed me coolly. Then, to his idle friend, he reiterated: "Me no

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know 'bout he. Him perhaps Jamaica man, but me no tink so."

"Beggin' to excuse, sah!" Mitch-chell



"Mitch-Chell."

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broke off, unable longer to stand convicted of such ignorance of a white man in whose company he was traveling, "weh you name, sah?"

"Weh me name got fe do wid it?" I asked.

At the reply in his own island dialect, Mitch-chell's idler friend yelled "Waa-a-ah!" at our guide's discomfiture. Mitchell's efforts in the following week to discover my name, nationality, business, recent movements, and family antecedents were amusing.

As we passed along the single half street, several donkey processions passed us. Every donkey was laden with bunches of bananas bound to pack-saddles. Already the drivers or owners of the bananas and the donkeys were haggling with the "runners" of the rival fruit companies, who were "raising the limit" on one another and offering tips and promises of rum as inducements to sell. Already the "banana night" was on and it promised some activity in this little sun-baked settlement by the sea.

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But the moment we left the street and walked right into a grove of palms which merged into a grove of sand-and-mud-floored mangrove, it was as if the world was mighty far from an African coast jungle.

It grew gratefully cool as we neared the river. Presently we came to a pebbly beach where a number of canoes were lined up—canoes dug in one piece from the soft cottonwood tree. Also there were a number of native women washing clothes by beating the water out of them on the boulders. The women were like unto Eve before the fall and quite as unconscious of being so. One, however, showed an ostrich sense of embarrassment by covering her face with her hands!

Mitch-chell launched one of the canoes. I sat at one end of it and he with paddle at the other. Willis had the seat of honor—the only seat of any kind. We paddled upstream, scaring and scattering dozens of coot before us, and moored to the overhanging mangroves at a point facing a wide bend. The bend carried the current off to

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one side, leaving a gently circling blue-hole inside its deflected course.

Tied up thus with the mangroves behind and above us, it was impossible to cast overhead. But Mitch-chell had long since learned to overcome this difficulty. He let out thirty or forty feet of line which he coiled as a sailor does a rope, keeping the leader and lead in his right hand. Then he cast from both hands.

I have seen Mitch-chell make some creditable casts in this manner. In any event, it was good enough for our purpose in that confined river. Besides, Mitch-chell had a knack of landing the bait just where he wanted it to fall, so that the current would take it just where he wanted it to rest. Then the fish would do the rest.

Willis got the first bite. His mind—mine, too, for that matter—had been running on tarpon. We had not the slightest doubt that he had hooked one. His disgust, therefore, was extreme when the fish came along as a fat little snapper, weighing not more than a pound! Yet that fish made

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more fuss than a young tarpon I had seen the Jamaican land a month before.

When I got a bite a few minutes later, I was satisfied that I had *not* hooked a tarpon. Lest anyone should think it is going to *be* a tarpon, it may be stated right away that it was only another snapper!

We got a fine mess of fish that afternoon; but no tarpon nibbled, although Willis shook his rod, muttered the most endearing piscatorial terms, and coaxed the water with many an incantation.

But an odd thing did happen on Willis's line that day. He had just drawn a snapper alongside the canoe when out of the depths rushed a great fish. With one snap it took Willis's catch, hook, leader, and all.

"Good Lord!" gasped Willis. "Was that a tarpon?"

"Snook!" yelled Mitch-chell. "Big snook! Weh you tink—huh!"

We fished a while for that snook, but neither snook nor snapper resulted. The big fellow was satisfied with his meal, no doubt, and the little fellows were either

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scared off by him or were tired of providing a meal for us.

The American would-not-be tourist was just putting on a new hook and bait when there came a sudden whir overhead. We looked up and remembered the Planter's remark about the wild pigeon's comings and goings between the swamps and the mountains.

"White wing—no, baldpate," said Mitchell. "See plenty—plenty now come sun-down."

And, of course, we had brought no guns.

"Say!" said Willis, laying down his rod. "There's an awful lot of mosquitoes around here. And I think it's past time for fishing and high time for shooting. Let's get the guns. *This* is a sportsman's paradise!"

III

A SPIDER ADVENTURE

The dusk was creeping over the Caribbean when we got back to the village. Village? Well, if it was, it must have been

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carnival night, or it was, as the Planter had prophesied, like a frontier gold camp. Here the treasure was the golden banana.

The huts were ablaze with light. The air was filled with every sound of activity. Crude lanterns moved about the beach and the road and illumined the semi-transparent palm-leaved booths where the bananas were being cornered from the moving market of donkeys, drays, carts, and negroes with head-loads of fruit.

Lights and voices and semi-darkness!—the lights reflected in the little sea-breakers that hummed above the voices on the beach and the semi-darkness seeming to chase bluish-gray daylight after its crimson mother behind the western hills.

From Sam Chung's rum-shop came a chorus of half-drunken negroes, who were already celebrating their little earnings with their little earnings. Down a rude wharf that jutted out beyond the now phosphorescent breakers, the natives chanted as they passed banana bunches into the first of the whale boats that would greet the steamer

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at dawn. One strong voice sing-songed the number of the bunch for the checker's ears (The Planter was checker) and another strong voice improvised, Homer-like, rhyme and tune to keep the work going cheerily:

Banana—*four!*
Now mek it some more!

Bana-ana—*five!*
Me boys, look alive!

Banana—*six!*
Etc., Etc., Etc.

We had dinner and watched the performance for a while. To Willis it was quite new, and to me it was almost so, for one may live beside a thing for years and never notice it until a stranger's pause reveals the significance of the thing.

It was the story of the banana—that banana which a New England sea captain thoughtfully regarded a quarter of a century ago when his schooner needed a cargo on the home run. He bought a shipload of the bunches that hitherto had been used

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mainly to feed pigs, made a swift passage with lucky breezes, and sold the whole cargo on a Boston pier-head at fancy prices. Thus began the history of the banana in the United States.

And now here it was in its prime. Down the street the big organization which the Planter's company was fighting had its booths and its wharf and its "runners." At the head of that whirlwind of buying, bribing, and jollyng was the Portuguese, who looked on silently and incessantly puffed his lavender-flavored pipe. Sometimes his runners came to blows with the Planter's. Sometimes a spy brought news of the Planter's having intercepted and bought a cartload of fruit which the big company had hoped to acquire. Then the Portuguese would speak of the Planter in terms that were lurid.

To Willis and myself it seemed that one day the Planter would assassinate the Portuguese, or *vice versa*. But we were to learn anew that good fighters are good

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sportsmen, and that when the weekly banana squabble was over the Portuguese would grin if the Planter could say, "Well, I skinned you last night, didn't I? Let's squeeze a lime on it!"

The Jamaican, in the meantime, was in our shack, keeping tally on the checks, cashing vouchers and honoring such mysterious orders as this, which would be scribbled by the Planter on a scrap of paper:

Give Obadiah Henry one drink of rum—a good stiff one. —P.

Obadiah would receive the drink in a tin cup. Before putting it down he would toast damnation to the company to which he had not sold his fruit, at the same time throwing in a compliment to the generosity of the one to which he did.

Although the row, within and without, kept up all night, Willis and I managed to get some sleep. The shack, a luxurious dwelling in the days when sugar was king and tall ships came to Rio Bueno, had a lot

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of rambling rooms. In one of these we camped, with a cot each.

Now, the American canvas folding-cot is an invention of the devil. The devil built it to be just too short for an average-sized man, so that either his pillow is sagging over the top-end or his feet are sticking over the edge of the bottom end. Also, the long-disused room in which we slept was, after the manner of all such in the tropics, full of scorpions and spiders. Willis had no personal acquaintance with the appearance, even, of those creatures.

In the middle of the night I awoke out of a restless sleep in which I dreamed my head was hanging over a precipice and I was slowly sliding off. I awoke to hear a sibilant "hist" in the darkness. I lay awake for a moment or two, thinking I had imagined the sound among so many others that were real. Outside, the "banana night" was still in full blast, and the strong voice was still chanting:

Bana-ana—leben!

Noder gone to Heaben!

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"Hist!" came from Willis's cot, followed by the whisper of my name.

"What's the matter?"

"Not so loud!" hissed Willis. "Something's just crawled over my face. Strike a light and see!"

I struck a match. Between my eyes getting used to the light and the match burning my fingers, this is what I saw:

Willis's feet were sticking out at the foot of the cot. At the other end I saw his face (somewhat alarmed in expression) surmounted by sleep-rumpled hair which added to his startled appearance. On the wall, just behind and over his head, was an immense spider!

"Lie perfectly still!" I whispered, following the correct wording in a jungle incident of this sort. "Don't move for your life!"

"You bet I won't," said Willis. "But don't scare him or he'll jump down on me."

"You can't scare *him*!" said I.

I procured a cane which we kept behind the door for defense against such an invader. I prepared to advance upon the



"Don't Move, for Your Life."
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spider that was hanging like a sword of Damocles over Willis. I made two or three aim-sweeps, after the manner of a golfer, then stopped my maneuvers to remark:

"If I miss he'll surely jump!"

"Well—*don't miss!*" said Willis perspiringly. It was quite a warm night.

Two or three more sweeps. Then—

"If I miss, you'd better get out of that bed—awful quick."

"All right!" whispered my American friend. "But for the Lord's sake, get busy!"

I made a crack at the wall and yelled:

"*Missed!*"

Willis was out of that bed like a rocket, brushing himself as if spiders were all over him.

When we looked around, the big fellow, unscathed, was on the opposite wall. How he got there we couldn't tell. After a good deal of skirmishing and battering of the walls until the old plaster came down in showers, we killed that spider.

Willis wiped the perspiration from his

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brow and looked at me—just looked at me. Then, getting a safe distance away from him, I explained that that spider, while vicious to look at, was as harmless as a baby's nipple—in a manner of speaking.

It was the Anancy spider of West Indian folk-lore and supposed to be gifted with superhuman faculties. Incidentally—although it is a pity to destroy a good perennial newspaper thriller—the Anancy is the same harmless spider which, when it jumps from a banana bunch in a grocer's store, is taken for a deadly tarantula and clears the immediate vicinity!

IV

“KLING-KLING,” BALDPATE, AND TARPON

We were awakened in the dawn by the shrill blast of a steamer's whistle. Through the neck of the bottle—as we called the break in the barrier reef out in the bay—came a big white steamer with a bone in her teeth. Against the green of the headlands, the early morning mauve of the sea, and the

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crimson of the east, the steamer seemed like some ghostly thing "upon a painted ocean."

The air was cool. The splash of the little breakers on the beach added to the coolness by suggestion. Through the palms trickled a light breeze with a sound like running water, while from the thicker cocoanut grove at the east end of the village came a strange chorus of sounds. It was as if an army of little blacksmiths were hammering tiny anvils.

To think of Rio Bueno is to hear again the "kling-kling" birds in the palms at dawn. They are blackbirds of a sort. It appears that they assemble in rookeries at dusk, and go to bed silently as they come home in ones or pairs. Getting up as the sun lifts its head, all join together in that wonderful anvil chorus—"kling-kling, kling-kling, kling-kling."

The banana night was over. The whaleboats, piled with green and golden fruit, were already swarming around the sides of the ship. Gunports swung open; the first bunch was passed up and stowed to a native

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song. In an hour, with song and shout, the transfer to the holds was effected. Then the gunboats swung to; the whaleboats backed off and came to the shore, high and empty; the steamer blew three blasts; her prow swung around until it pointed toward Cape Maysi, Cuba, and then the banana, which yesterday swung on its stem in the tropic breezes, was being rushed by express steamer to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston.



Sam Chung—Gambler and Rum Seller.

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The Jamaican and the Planter came in with the Portuguese, who had had the best of this week's fight.

"I had you beaten from the start," said the Portuguese. "Before midnight I had six thousand stems—"

"A-all right!" said the Planter, with a laugh. "Is there a lime in the house?"

"Hang a lime!" said the Jamaican. "Let's have some black coffee, a splash in the surf, and take the guns along for a pot-shot before breakfast. Then, after breakfast, tarpon—and sleep during the hot hours."

Now, who could resist that! Twenty minutes later, awakened to alertness by the black coffee, the five of us made a racing plunge from the beach to the surf.

We swam around just outside the surf until we came to the river-mouth, where Mitch-chell met us with the canoe. Naked, wet, and shining like sea-island savages, we climbed in and found shot, shell, and guns in the little craft. Up the river we paddled, moored to the mangroves and, going ashore,

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we ambushed ourselves around a comparative clearing in the rank jungle. The wild pigeons were just rising and swooping around like express trains before taking final flight for the high lands.

"Mark!" was the cry when a bird was sighted.

"B-bang!" would go a couple of guns at once.

Shooting at a mark flying at sixty miles an hour is no child's play. Two of us, at least, were children at the game. The Jamaican was a wonder. A white-wing whizzed past. Four guns exploded. The white-wing darted on unscathed. Then the Jamaican fired just as the bird reached the skyline of mangroves. Struck dead, it came down at an angle of sixty-five degrees, carried forward by its own impetus.

The white-wing, together with a fat baldpate which Willis "potted," were served on toast as an added breakfast luxury.

Then, clad in pajamas, the four of us—the Portuguese said it was "too much like work"—went to the river again. This time

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we were after tarpon. We took with us a basket full of bottled soda-water. You cannot be too careful about water in the tropics. In case of germs, even in the soda-water, the Planter added an advertisement for the mountain rills of Scotland. When we had been fishing for an hour somebody discovered that we had no cup to drink out of. Mitch-chell got a dry calabash, split the gourd into two deep saucers, and thoroughly cleansed them.

Picture, then, four savages fishing in a tropic river, with palms, bananas, mangroves, and reeds on either side, the sun blazing overhead and the savages drinking whisky and soda out of calabash shells!

Then picture the Jamaican dropping his calabash and laying on to his reel. Just watch the big fellow break the still water and leap into the air, shimmering and shuddering and trying to shake the hook from his mouth. Hear the heavy splash as he drops in again! See the line cut the water and the pole bend!

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Then the line slacks and the reel creaks. Again the tarpon leaps, and for half an hour the Jamaican, his dark eyes aglow, does battle with the king of sporting fish, while Willis shakes his rod and asks the waters if they've any more like that! If you listen closely you will hear Mitch-chell yelling and the Planter offering advice and the Jamaican telling them both to shut up! If you watch closely, you will see your humble servant hooking a mudfish and covertly slipping it back into the river.

The tarpon comes alongside, logy from drowning, rolling in the water like a drunken thing. Mitch-chell would lift it out of the water by grabbing the line! The Jamaican's language is awful. The tarpon shoots off again—a last round in the fight. Then the gaff takes him in the gills and he comes aboard, striking the bottom of the canoe with a mighty flourish of his tail.

“Who stepped on my calabash!” demands the Jamaican, elate while pretending to be

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interested only in the gourd which he has crushed under his own feet in the excitement.

Back to the shack at noon. Four savages snoring on the cots, while outside the sun glares on the deserted beach where the trade-winds are driving heavier breakers and rushing through the palm fronds with the noise of far waterfalls.

Oh! the lazy hum of the sea, the high-pitched song of the wind, the thud of a dislodged cocoanut striking a shingled roof or the sand, the glaring beach and the white, crumbling walls, the buzz of near insects, and the yawning abyss of the blue sky over it all—That's Rio Bueno!

At sundown we swam again and shot duck in the swamp. Willis shot a coot by mistake and— But I promised not to mention it, or the fact that for the rest of the week the natives who could not pronounce his name referred to him as—"De gemman wich shoot de coot!"

And for days and days—such days!—we repeated those performances. In the surf

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at dawn; in the swamp at sunrise; on the river after breakfast; snoring through the hot hours, or lazily telling stories under a shady palm; in the bay with handlines in the afternoon, or exploring the old Spanish ruins; and in ambush for white-wing and baldpate at dusk.

What if the sun blistered us? To-morrow the blisters hardened. What if the canoe upset? The clothes *we* wore suffered nothing from wetting. What if we breathed the air of a smoky lamp and shook dice until after midnight? We breathed the trade-wind all day. What if the police force bet his last shilling on the game and lost it? What if the four savages lost more than was discreet on one particular night? Did not Sam Chung (a brother of the infamous Ah Sin) derive benefit therefrom? And did not Willis show himself a true sportsman when he loaned the Portuguese his suitcase that he might take home fifteen pounds in English silver from that little game!

A bad lot! But a good, red-blooded,

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healthy-minded lot of searchers after wickedness. The quiet reader may frown upon us, but we'd do it again, if we could. But we couldn't. It wouldn't be the same again. It's the old story of the mood and the moment.

It came Saturday night. The Planter and the Jamaican were respectable married men with votes and private pews. Pulling long faces they excused themselves until Monday and drove away to the hill town, leaving Willis and me alone in Rio Bueno.

We needed a rest, and so did Rio Bueno. The moment we let up, the street and the beach fell asleep. The river became placid and the swamps echoless. The alarmed coot came back. Even the sea-breeze died down, and there was hardly a ripple on the sea.

We went to bed early that night. The silence of it was profound, and there was a big moon. I think the stillness must have made Willis nervous. In the middle of the night I was awakened by the nerve-jarring sound of some one breaking a revolver.

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I sat up on my cot. There was brilliant moonlight streaming in out of the night. Willis was facing a door which I had never



I Was Behind Him With a Shotgun, Both Barrels Ready.

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noticed before but which probably led into some other portion of the disused old building. In Willis's hand was a revolver.

I watched him curiously. He crept toward the door, through a crack in which appeared a dim light. What did the light mean? Who was there? Some old Spanish phantom or buccaneer ghost come back to his old haunts? Then a thin voice came to us in a queer sing-song:

'N gwa sam fun he
Jaicu doy 'n gwa.
Jaicu doy 'n gwa, Jaicu doy 'n—

Willis burst the door open with his shoulder. I was now behind him with a shotgun, both barrels ready. Out went the light in the other room and there was deathly stillness.

"Who are you and what d'y' want!" demanded Willis.

There was more silence, then, in pained tones——

"Me Sam Chung. What hellee mean?"

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Me say Christmas 'ligion player. You come shootee me what for?"

We had been too busy all week to learn that Sam Chung, the rum-shop keeper, rented a corner of the old tumble-down place for a sleeping room. He had been saying his prayers when we burst in with the armament. I have since learned that the queer jargon he was singing was "I am so glad that Jesus loves me"—in Chinese.

Willis did penance by going to church next day. There *was* a church, as we discovered when a bell rang out over the bay.

I went exploring. I had heard that there was a remarkable old Spanish fort on the western headland. I walked along the single street to the west. The way took me past old slave-built houses with massive masonry—relics of the days when twenty-seven barques were anchored at one time in that bay, waiting for puncheons of rum and hogsheads of sugar. This was the Rising Sun Hotel where planters spent fortunes in wine, women, and song. This was the Duke

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of Wellington where sailors from all the world used to drink, swear, and stab.

The road swung abruptly toward the headland. I found the ruins of an old gateway. Farther in a Cromwellian gun, stuck on end, seemed to have served in later days as a hitching-post. Then the trail went dimly into thick undergrowth.

I crushed through for about fifty yards and came up against a high solid wall, pierced with gunports through which obsolete, abandoned monsters stuck their menacing arms. I worked around the wall, which formed four sides of a square, until I found an opening. Inside, the place was roofed only with twisted brush and lianas. It was paved with cobblestones. A single big gun, lying on the stones, was choked with earth and creepers. Near the touch-hole I found the ancient arms of Castile!

I stood still. The place was tenanted with ghosts. From somewhere in Rio Bueno village came a stertorous voice, roaring mysteriously:

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"And he howled and he ho-owled and he ho-o-owled!"

The "howling" failed to disturb the mood. I was surrounded by things of the past. I was rubbing elbows with people that were long dead. There were mailed Spanish soldiers, pacing up and down over the cobblestones, and peering at intervals through the gunports for the Indians, the French corsairs, and Cromwell's men.

They were all dead. I seemed to dream over a century or two while the voice "ho-owled" in the village—Columbus, the Arawak Indians, the Spaniards, the buccaneers and the English. And now—the sea-breeze was singing through the palms as of yore, while the conquered and reconquered and finally abandoned weapons of war were yawning at the vacant skies, or being wreathed in creepers and choked by earth.

When I got back to the shack after finding sermons in guns, I asked Willis what the howling was about.

"It was a native parson," said he. "I

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couldn't follow his dialect. All I know is that he preached about the leper in the wilderness, and it is firmly established in my mind that he howled and ho-owled and ho-o-owled!"

In the morning the Planter and the Jamaican came galumphing back, and we squeezed four limes.

When the end of the week came, we were as brown as treacle-cakes almost. After seven days at Rio Bueno the would-not-be tourist refused to go back even to the comparative civilization of a Jamaican port. Also his cup of happiness was full, for he landed his tarpon that last day. As it was not my tarpon I refuse to state its weight and size!

"I want to step right out of Rio Bueno into Broadway," said Willis. "This is all I want to remember."

That was banana day. All night long the little village that was dead six days a week roared like a gold-mining camp.

The dawn brought the steamer with a

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bone in her teeth. Willis, once more clothed and in his civilized mind, stepped into a whale-boat, or rather crawled in and took a seat on top of a pile of banana bunches. The three other savages climbed up beside him.

As a last bit of sport we raced the unwieldy banana boats toward the anchored steamer, much to the joy of the vessel's



"There's a Lady With a Pink Parasol
on the Saloon Deck."

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commander who was in a hurry to clear for America. He rewarded us suitably in his private cabin and remarked, as he surveyed the remaining three savages:

"If you fellows got a hair-cut, shaved, and put on some decent clothes you might be quite passable chaps!"

When the steamer blew its whistle three times, three savages tumbled into an empty whaleboat. The propeller of the steamer began to churn.

"There's a lady with a pink parasol on the saloon deck!" yelled the Planter to the departing savage.

"And a fat man with a crash suit abaft the funnel!" cried the Jamaican.

"If you fellows could see yourselves," said the would-not-be tourist, grinning down upon us, "you'd be ashamed of the picture."

And he leveled his camera over the receding taffrail and snapped us where we stood in the wave-bobbed whaleboat.

OUT WITH THE FISH PATROL

OUT WITH THE FISH PATROL

I

A MORNING CALL

BEING at Campobello Island on the Canadian side of Passamaquoddy Bay, at the time when The Hague Tribunal, in its decision upon the Fisheries Disputes, held that Great Britain had the sovereign right "to make fisheries regulations without the concurrence of the United States," I gained the promise of the captain of one of the Dominion Fisheries Patrols that at the first opportunity he would show me "inside" the work done by the "sovereign power" on the international line.

Still, it was a bit discomfoting to have someone hammering at the door at three o'clock of a morning when the horns were trying to scare off an invading Fundy fog. The hammerer was shrouded in oilskins.

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Behind him stood a man in civilian clothes. The civilian shivered in the early morning chill.

"Ready?" said the man in oilskins.

"B-but you said f-four." It was quite cool. "And it's only ten to three!"

"Oh, that's your American time. It's about four by the Canadian watch. Suppose you jump into some clothes and come with us to Spruce Island. There's something doing in fish dynamiters up there."

"All right. Give me ten minutes."

The man in oilskins, Captain Silas Mitchell, of Dominion Fisheries Patrol No. 2, disappeared in the fog, followed by the chilly civilian, who happened to be John F. Calder, a Dominion Fisheries Inspector, locally known as "Johnny" Calder. Ten minutes later I was in boots and waterproof, on the road to the cove and on the trail of interesting things.

The fog was thick at that hour. A waning moon made a whitish sheen in the upper strata of mist. The foghorn of East Quoddy on the Canadian side was echoing

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West Quoddy on the American side. Through the dark spruce fringing of the bay one could see nothing but a wall of opaque white, through which came the sound of quiet rowlocks.

The dinghy came out of the veil like a shadow. I climbed in. Three strokes of the oars and the shore vanished. For a minute or two there was nothing in the world but an encircling white bubble. Then the squat hull of the patrol loomed ahead. Little as she was, she was as sea-gray as any other of His Majesty's service ships and, incidentally, did more actual work than the King's biggest Dreadnought.

"All right, Polkenhorn," said Captain Silas to a face in the engine room window. "Start 'er up!"

Just as Polkenhorn turned to his engine, there came a gentle splashing alongside.

"There's Sport," said Inspector Calder. "Pass him the boathook, Charlie."

Officer Cline, the captain's mate, passed no boathook. He dropped his arm over the side and fished up a black dog which had

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swum off from the land. As the engine started and Captain Mitchell dropped into his little conning-house forward, I took a good look at that amphibious dog. I recalled having seen the same animal leg-deep in the water at low tide, prowling along in a hunt for flounders and sculpin, which it would dive for. Also I had seen it lying, like a black figurehead, on the prow of the patrol as it steamed along the international line in search of lobster-poachers, grapnel-artists, and dynamiters.

The patrol—derisively called the *Pup* by those who fear it—was stealing out into the bay. Her engines made next to no sound. Captain Mitchell was at the wheel, his weather-tanned, keen-eyed face framed in the little conning-window. Through this he could see the inverted V of the bows with the dog crowning it and the wall of fog into which the strange animal was peering. Polkenhorn was in the engine room amidship, while Officer Cline was in the cabin aft, cooking breakfast. Calder and I sought the cabin. There were several old-

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fashioned Sniders in a rack and a .45 Colt hung by its trigger-guard on the wall.

"Ever use 'em?"

"Sometimes," said Cline, turning the frying ham. "We hope for better things, though. The *Curlew* carries Rosses and a Gatling. Also, we've got to have oil fuel. Our smoke's a dead give-away sometimes."

"Good thing you've come this year," said the Inspector to me. "Things will all be different soon. Under the new fisheries laws the two countries will work together. The United States is going to put a proper patrol system on the other side—a cruiser like the *Curlew*, with a number of patrols like the *Pup* here. They've agreed to similar close seasons and regulations, and the patrol system will be mutual working together. It'll be a heap better than fisheries disputes. They've made a deal of hard feeling.

"You see," he continued, warming up as the ham sizzled in the pan, "the differing laws made the line a kind of hedge for wrongdoers—a convenient fence to jump

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over. It had a bad influence on the Canadian fishermen as well as the Americans. The fact that our people could sell lobsters at Eastport on the Maine shore was a temptation to work lobster traps out of season and smuggle the crawlers over to the American side.

"Under the new international fisheries law, there will be the same regulations about lobsters, among other things, and maybe down around Broadway, New York, lobsters'll go up. Seven months of the year it will be unlawful to catch them."

"That, of course, doesn't argue Broadway won't get 'em just the same," put in Cline, from the vicinity of the sizzling ham.

"Of course it doesn't," said the Inspector. "I wonder if the Broadway folk know when they're picking claws, that some poor devil risked his liberty or a patrol bullet getting them!"

"Ready for coffee?" asked Cline abruptly.

Under a swinging lamp we ate breakfast with the blank wall of fog surrounding the

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speeding patrol. Officer Cline, having cooked breakfast, relieved Captain Silas at the wheel, and Silas came aft to eat. Between gulps of coffee he took up the tale where the Inspector left off.

"The Canadians could fish in American waters, but the Americans couldn't fish this side of the line," said he. "Result? Bad feeling. Seen the time when the American boys would chase a school of pollock right up to the line, and the fish would cross it before the scooping nets were ready. You can't altogether blame 'em if sometimes they forgot to remember and crossed the line after the fish. Of course, that would be where the patrol got busy."

Captain Silas grinned into his coffee cup.

"Last Friday," he said, more to the Inspector than to me, "Dave M'Cutcheon from Lubec was waiting for a school to rise just about the line. I was lying right alongside and Dave sings out:

"'How 'bout it, Silas? Am I over the line, or ain't I?"

"'You're all right,' says I. 'Scoop 'em

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up when they break water, and here's luck to ye. I'll toot the *Pup's* whistle if you get too near the line. I'll toot twice if you're on it. Then I won't toot any more, for I'll go in an' arrest ye!

"Dave got his fish all right," added Captain Silas with a laugh "—a good scoop of forty or fifty big fellows. But he skinned it awful close. I had two of the line buoys right in my eye and he couldn't have been more'n an inch to the American side!"

The way the Captain told that story suggested a good deal of sympathy with the fishermen on both sides.

"Sure!" said he. "We're all the same people. Every time you arrest a man, it's ten to one you're arresting a blood relation. I do my duty and these fellows know I've got to do it. There's no need to get sore, except—"

"Except?"

"Well, there are some fellows not big enough to know what a square deal is. There's the fellow who sees me steam up the bay, then deliberately crosses the line,

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dynamites a school of fish, and gets back over with his loot. He can show me how many he got, once he's on his own side of the line—and sometimes he does!"

"Isn't there a patrol on the American side of the boundary line to take care of his kind?"

"Yes, but one little launch can't be all over the bay at one time. Besides that, the American law says you must see the man throw the dynamite and prove that the fish were killed by it. On our side it's enough to catch a man with a stick of dynamite in his possession."

Again the captain grinned—this time at his plate of ham and eggs.

"The other day I saw Henry Thomson snooping along suspicious-like. Went after him and brought up alongside his dory.

"'Morning, Henry,' says I. 'Ye don't happen to have any dynamite aboard this fine morning?"

"'Dynamite!' says Henry. 'No, sir-ree! I'm skeered o' that stuff.' Then he gave me a sad tale about how Willum McManus

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blowed his right leg off monkeying with that there stuff over to Digby Neck.

"I saw his coat lying in the bottom of the boat. I lifted it on the end of a boathook, and there were two of the fattest, juiciest sticks of dynamite you ever saw! You should have seen Henry's face.

"'Well, I be damned!' says he. 'Now, how did that get in my boat!'

"'Come aboard, Henry,' says I, and we took his dory in tow."

The engines stopped as the Captain did.

"Spruce Island, I guess," said he to the Inspector. "No need to drop anchor. You and Cline and our friend here can get ashore in the dinghy and moor her. Polkenhorn and I'll get back to Cam'bello before sunup, so it'll look as if we'd never stirred from our mooring. That may get the dynamiters busy up here. Then the rest of it's up to you fellows."

Five minutes later the three of us ran the dinghy into a little cliff-enclosed cove, each of us armed with a revolver, a loaf of bread, and a canned luncheon. When I

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turned to look for the patrol, it had gone as noiselessly as it had come. Where it had been there was nothing but gray-black water and a curtain of fog.

II

ON SPRUCE ISLAND

We moored the boat to a spruce tree on a rope about twenty yards long. The great Fundy tide had to be reckoned with. It was now low, but before we left the island the sea was up to the rocks at the base of the tree.

"Well, what's the game here?" I asked.

"Just taking a chance," said the Inspector. "The fish school at low tide. Several men have been dynamiting here during the last week. We know their names, but we've got to get them in the act, or with the dynamite in their possession. We'll lay low and maybe they'll walk into a trap."

We explored the island during the next half hour. It was a little bit of a thing—an uprising mass of rock, densely wooded

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with spruce and fir above the tidemark, and carpeted with rich grass, moss, clover, and blueberry. A veritable paradise for a summer camp, this morning it was draped in a ghostly robe of fog. The trees dripped water. The moss and clover were heavy with moisture, and on the Fundy side the mist drove through the trees like rain.

"We may have had a run for nothing," said the Inspector gloomily. "It's only in books that fog is good for malefactors. Your fish dynamiter wants a clear day when he can see five or six miles up and down the bay. In the fog he doesn't know but what the *Pup's* steaming along not twenty yards from him."

This stirred reminiscence in Officer Cline. He asked me, as we returned to the cove where we had moored the boat, if I had ever noticed a white dinghy that Mr. Merriman, of Campobello, used for fly-fishing.

"That dinghy's got a history," said he. "There was a fellow drawing lobster-traps in the fog one day. We nearly ran him down. We were as surprised as he was—

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more, in fact, for he was rowing to beat the band before Silas could signal Polkenhorn to let 'er rip. We didn't want to fire, for we had him dead to rights. He was making for the shore and we could keep up with him. When we got into water too shallow for our draught, we hollered at him to surrender, but he kept on going. I jumped into our own dinghy and took after him. He beached his boat just where he happened to hit the shore and took to the woods with a lobster-trap over his head to hide his face.

"He got clear away in the woods, but we towed the dinghy into Welchpool, full of illegitimate lobsters. Mr. Merriman bought it at public auction."

"What became of the lobsters?" demanded Calder.

"How should I know!" Cline retorted. "It was illegal to *sell* them."

We spread an oilskin coat on the damp moss in a little glade where we could see without being seen. We had over four hours to kill.

"Say," said Johnny Calder at a mysteri-

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ous tangent, "is it true that in some places in the South Seas the natives use shells for money?"

"Kowries? Oh, yes," said I, wondering what line of thought had seized the Inspector. He began very thoughtfully to whittle a stick.

"For the most part," I asked, "what does the daily patrol work consist of?"

As the Inspector was preoccupied with the jack-knife, Cline answered:

"Patrolling the line. So long as we are on the line nothing much happens. A policeman is as much a prevention as he is a cure. Some days, when the fish are schooling, we just lie around the fleet, watching the boys haul in fish till you hate the sight of them. So long as the Canadians don't violate the regulations, all we have to do is to keep the American boys on their own side. Of course, we've got to remember what may be going on around the headland in the next cove. You can't be everywhere at once, but if you seem to be—that's good enough."

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"There aren't any kowries here, are there?" said the Inspector thoughtfully, still following his mysterious tangent.

"No—none here. I should think," turning again to Cline, "that you must have had some unpleasant encounters with the American fishermen."

"Now and then," said Officer Cline. "We had a ticklish one not long ago. There were half a dozen dynamiters from the Maine shore that had been awful annoying to Silas—the fellows who skipped over the line just as he came up. Silas hates to use a gun, but one day he got mad clear through. He heard the explosion and saw them take the fish. He crammed on all speed and seemed as if he'd get to them before they got to the line.

"But presently it looked like another get-away. Silas couldn't stand for it. He whipped out one of the Sniders and sent a young cannon-ball right over their heads, then another one between their boats. Still, they didn't stop. Silas didn't fire again, because there might be a war if you hit an

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American who was one-eighth of an inch over to his own side.

"But the funny thing was that they stopped right over the line and began swearing something awful. Silas came up, mad clear through, likewise. But what d'y' suppose? A couple of them got up with dynamite in their hands and lifted their arms in a way that made a man's scalp creep.

"'You blankety - blank - blank!' they cussed. 'You'll shoot at us, will ye? Now you put down that gun *quick* or—'

"Silas didn't put it down. He put it up to his shoulder.

"'Look here,' says Silas, 'the minute that leaves your hand the man I'm covering's a dead one!'

"'If you pull that trigger,' says one of them, 'the rest of us will send you skyhigh to glory!'

"So there we were at a deadlock. They held up the dynamite ready to throw and Silas never took his finger off the trigger,

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or his eye off the man he was covering. But the *Pup* was drifting off a little, and when she was at a bit safer distance, he says:

“‘Now, listen to me. If you throw that dynamite, you’ll miss our hull, or the concussion won’t be hard enough at this distance to set it off. If any of you attempt to light a stick, we’ll riddle you. Charlie,’ he sang out to me, ‘are you ready with that other Snider?’

“I sure was, and so was Polkenhorn with the big Colt. That was too much for the dynamiters. They talked a lot, but finally rowed away. You see, the line was between us and them and we couldn’t even resent their language!”

“How much is a kowrie worth?” asked Inspector Calder.

“I don’t know,” said I, “but what in thunder’s got into *your* head?”

“Well,” said Johnny Calder, “suppose a kowrie is worth a cent, and each of these chips I’ve whittled is worth a kowrie—”

He drew a pack of cards from his pocket

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and inquired, as a man might ask after another's health:

"Can you play poker?"

III

THE LOBSTER-POACHER

I seldom play poker, despite contrary evidence set down in black and white in these various adventures of a tenderfoot. But it seems to be my fate, when I do play, to become involved in queer games in queer places. Here we were, dealing an aged pack on a wet oilskin, with whittled chips, and on a fog-shrouded speck of an island in the Bay of Fundy.

No wonder the Inspector cleaned me out! Officer Cline, who remained on watch, kept restlessly moving among the trees, stopping at intervals to peer through a break at the sea. It was difficult to keep one's mind on poker when there was so much about the brass-buttoned figure in the green brush that was suggestive of half-forgotten chapters in smuggling novels.

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"It's your play," said the Inspector. "There's half a cord of wood in the pot!"

At a sudden signal from Cline, we left the cards and chips on the oilskin and took to ambush. Through the fog came the sputtering of a motor. It grew louder. Out of the veil shot a boat propelled by a powerful "kicker." There were three men in it. The craft crossed the halo of visible water and vanished into the fog to our left.

"It's Eddie Murdoch," said Cline. "He's all right."

The poker game was resumed and continued for some time, although it was disturbed at irregular intervals by the sound of an approaching motor-boat. They were all law-respecters, however, and we let them pass without even exchanging the time of day. Brothers of the law-violators, our discovered presence on Spruce Island would have been passed from lip to ear right down the bay, and the ends of justice for the many would have been defeated by the few.

"They never bear witness against one another," said the Inspector. "The decent

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fellows don't approve of dynamiting. It cleans out the fish too fast. But if another fellow dynamites, it's his business and the patrol's lookout. The other fellows don't talk."

Cline whistled from his ambush. We looked toward him. There was a grin on the officer's face and he was beckoning us. Through the fog came the low beat of muffled oars.

"Pity we're after bigger game," said Cline, "but I don't think there'll be anything else doing. Shall I take him?"

"It would spoil the plant for another day," said the Inspector. "Let him go. But watch," he said, turning to me, "this is a lobster poacher."

When we saw the boat it was as a blur in the fog. It disappeared. In a little while the oars could not be heard.

"Drawing a trap further up!" whispered the Inspector.

"He'll come in here though," said Cline. "That's a trap buoy—that stick floating off the cove-mouth there. Wait!"

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Cline had gauged the signs rightly. The faint oar-sweeps came again. We could hear the creaking of the timbers under the rower's feet. The boat came back into the bubble of the fog.

"Gee whiz!" was Cline's whisper. "It's old man B——!"

"Who'd ever have thought!" Calder muttered. "Only yesterday he was giving me information about somebody else!"

The old man in the boat—he was white-bearded and nearer seventy than sixty—backed very cautiously into the cove. He didn't see our dinghy at first. He ran his boat alongside the floating stick and was about to ship oars and draw the illegal trap when—he saw the other boat!

I never saw such an expression on a human face. His eyes widened with terror. A misty pallor stole over his old face. His hands, which had been closed over the trap-buoy, slowly lowered the stick back into the water. With his eyes still fascinated by that slate-gray dinghy, he drew quietly on his oars and presently his boat was swal-

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lowed up by the merciful veil of fog that lay on the water.

"Isn't that too bad!" said the Inspector, after a while.

"That's what it is," said Cline.

"That old man," said Calder, turning to me, "was once one of the most prosperous fishermen around here. He owned several schooners and bought the little island he lives on. He raised a family that got ambitious. He sent the sons to college and— Well, it's an old story. Anyway, the old man has nothing left but his house and his old woman, and it's a puzzle how they keep body and soul together. He ruined himself paying debts, and now the old fellow's come down to trapping illegal lobsters in the Fundy fog."

"I'm glad it wasn't convenient to arrest him."

"Well," said Calder, "it's a paternal government. We have to be discreetly generous at times. This is the line between two countries and peace and goodwill are mighty important here. It's a hard life at best

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those fellows lead. A long winter and no fish, and a short summer with fish maybe shy or scarce. You've got to be considerate. President Taft himself said right off the library steps at Eastport not long ago that the cementing of the friendship between the two countries depended quite a lot on the good feeling here at the line. The fisheries disputes, now—"

"Here's the *Pup!*" interrupted Officer Cline.

The little slate-gray vessel stole like a ghost into the halo of clear water opposite the cove. From her conning window Captain Mitchell was scanning the woods in search of us. The black dog, lying like a figurehead on the bow, "spotted" us first. It did not bark. It merely stood up and pointed with its dripping, shaggy snout. Silas understood and signaled Polkenhorn to stop the noiseless engines.

Twenty minutes later, as we steamed down the bay, the fog suddenly lifted and the brilliant, warm sunshine flooded the waters and the green islands of Passama-

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quoddy. Cline put the glass to his eye, surveyed an island to starboard and laughed.

"The old man's boat is moored and there isn't a soul in sight. Bet he's abed with the rheumatism!"

Captain Silas heard and laughed.

"Been abed for *days*, most like," said he. "Captain Milne, of the *Curlew*, was telling me a funny one last week. Over to Digby Neck, on the Nova Scotia shore, he chased some French poachers. They got ashore and he went after them with a couple of hands. They found the chief Frenchy in bed with fever and ague and a row of medicine bottles on a chair beside him. Milne whisked the covers off him, and there was Frenchy in bed with his oilskins on, and the sand was still sticking to his wet rubber boots!"

IV

THE DYNAMITERS TRAPPED

They got the dynamiters. Life may be short and art may be long, but in the in-

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terest of that truth which is eternal, it may be as well to state that I was not in at the death. As Silas said, "You can't make such things happen to order."

Nevertheless, the affair was too full of interest for the smallest detail to get away. They talked of nothing else for weeks at the Civic Forum—i. e., George Byron's grocery store at Welchpool. They talked of little else on the American side, and since the clever trick was "pulled off" there has been a scarcity of dynamite in Passamaquoddy Bay, and no scarcity of respect for His Majesty's *Pup*.

It was Inspector Calder who got the idea. He had been working his brains for some way to circumvent the dynamiters, who slipped across the line before the patrol could get at them. One day the Inspector, having consumed seventeen toothpicks, wrote a letter to James Donahue, Commissioner of Sea and Shore Fisheries for the State of Maine. The letter contained a statement of the case and an invitation to the American Commissioner to "meet me

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somewhere." The Commissioner entered the *entente cordiale* and appointed a rendez-vous—at sea!

It was a Monday morning. The *Pup* lay at her mooring in the lee of Campobello Island. The fishermen, especially the Americans, were jubilant, for it appeared that Silas had gone to a *school meeting*! The bay was alive with shoals of fish, and the patrol remained at anchor without a bit of steam in her boilers. The Americans were scooping up fish on the Canadian side and dynamite was being used, certainly by the Maine men and no doubt by the Canadians, too.

And still the *Pup* did not move or fire up. Still Silas was ashore, tired out perhaps after the school meeting debate. As a matter of fact, Captain Mitchell was at home praying, after the manner of a famous general, for night to come or Johnny Calder!

In the meantime, Inspector Calder had left home early in the morning in a motor-boat, ostensibly bound for St. Stephen, on

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the St. Croix River. Once out of Passamaquoddy waters, Johnny Calder doubled and sailed down the Fundy side of Campobello. While the fishermen were having a picnic in the bay and the *Pup* seemed to have forgotten its usefulness, the Dominion Fisheries Inspector was drifting in his motor-boat somewhere south of Lubec, Maine.

As the afternoon wore on, Inspector Calder grew worried. The *Blücher* he was praying for was Commissioner Donahue, of Maine, who should have turned up in a launch out of Rockland. No launch hove in sight, and at nightfall the Inspector went back to Campobello, not at all pleased with the day's work. Where was Donahue and the plot?

"Maybe this'll explain it," said Captain Silas, handing the Inspector an unopened telegram.

Johnny Calder read the telegram, and his face cleared. The Commissioner's launch had broken down and been towed back into Rockland. The Commissioner had taken

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the train for St. Stephen, on the Canadian side of the border, and he was now registered at a hotel there as "Mr. Melancthon Fish." He was accompanied by "a friend." Inspector Calder got back aboard the motor-boat and left word that he had to go back to St. Stephen "again!"

Before dawn he returned with Mr. Fish and his friend. The latter was not a sea-going person. No barnacle could stick to his city apparel or sea wind disturb his indoor atmosphere. Mr. Fish and his friend had breakfast at the Campobello inn, then yielded to the kind invitation of Captain Silas Mitchell to take "a sail around in the *Pup*."

That Tuesday morning the fish and the fishermen were out in full force. Already there had been several muffled detonations out by the line. The dynamiters were taking advantage of the fact that Silas was entertaining some "city folks."

The patrol's funnel began to pour smoke. The dynamiters laughed. As the *Pup* steamed toward the line, the American

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dynamiters merely got on their own side of the line and went on dynamiting fish.

As has been described, when the patrol was in action only the head of Captain Mitchell could be seen at the conning window. The two visitors, sitting on a bench in the wheelhouse, could not be seen at all. Mr. Fish was very cool. Occasionally he patted his bulging hip-pockets. His city friend seemed a little nervous, especially when the patrol trembled as the exploding dynamite vibrated through the waters.

"Suppose they throw one under the patrol?" said he.

"Guess not," said Mr. Melancthon Fish. "Five minutes from now the last stick of dynamite will have been thrown."

The patrol was at the line. On the other side four or five American dories were preparing to launch the explosive sticks the moment a big school appeared on the surface.

"'Morning, Silas!" they sang out, with all the insolence of small boys on the safe side of the fence.

"'Morning," said Silas coolly. "Hope

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you're getting good returns for the risk you're taking."

"Oh, fair—fair!" said the dynamiters. "Bout a thousand between us—more or less, that is."

"So?" said Silas. "I'll get you one of these days on my side, then—"

The fish—an enormous school of ten- and twelve-pound pollock—broke water among the dynamiters' boats. Their ignited sticks struck the water at once. Almost simultaneously there came a triple detonation that churned the water white, threw'up a wave, tossed the dories dangerously, turned up hundreds of white bellied fish, and all but lifted the patrol out of the water.

The patrol shot across the international line, to the amazement of the American dynamiters. To their greater amazement and dismay, a figure sprang out of the wheelhouse with a Colt in each hand.

"Hands up, gentlemen!" said Mr. Melancthon Fish.

The dynamiters stared at the person, in

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whom they recognized Commissioner Donahue of the Maine Fisheries. They were caught with the goods on in a manner which was as clever as it was unexpected. But the looming portals of prison were more intimidating than the Colts. The dynamiters' boats scattered and lusty arms pulled for the shore. The patrol steamed after them. The Commissioner turned his armament on the nearest boat and held it up. In this boat he went ashore on the American side, the rowers his prisoners.

After the Commissioner got busy, the quiet city friend also came into swift action. He was a lawyer, and a smart one at that. From Captain Mitchell and Inspector Calder he obtained the names of the dynamiters. They were old enemies of the *Pup*, which had at last laid them by the heels in their own waters violating their own country's laws.

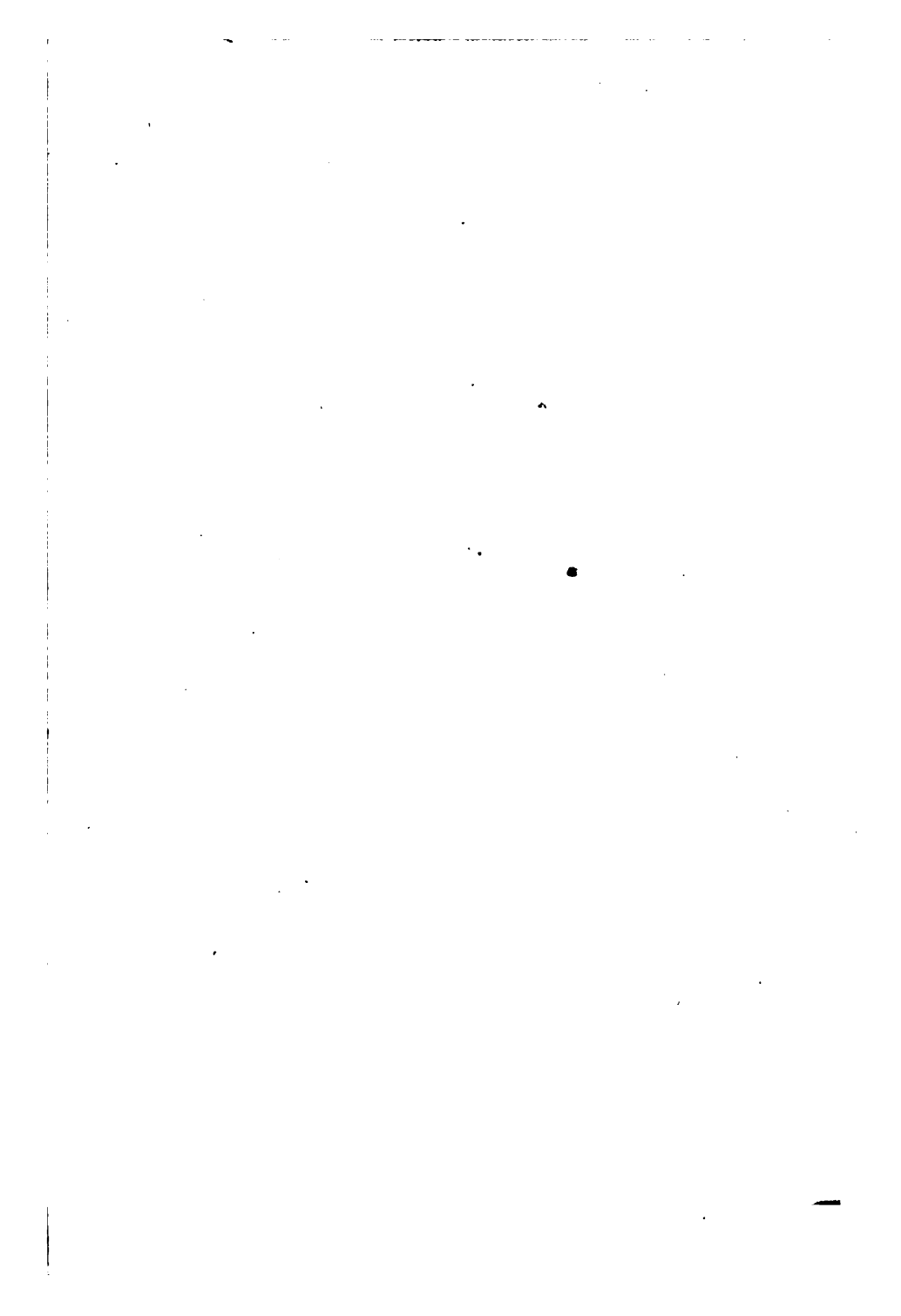
That afternoon warrants were sworn out by Commissioner Donahue and his lawyer. Before night the *Pup* picked up her moor-

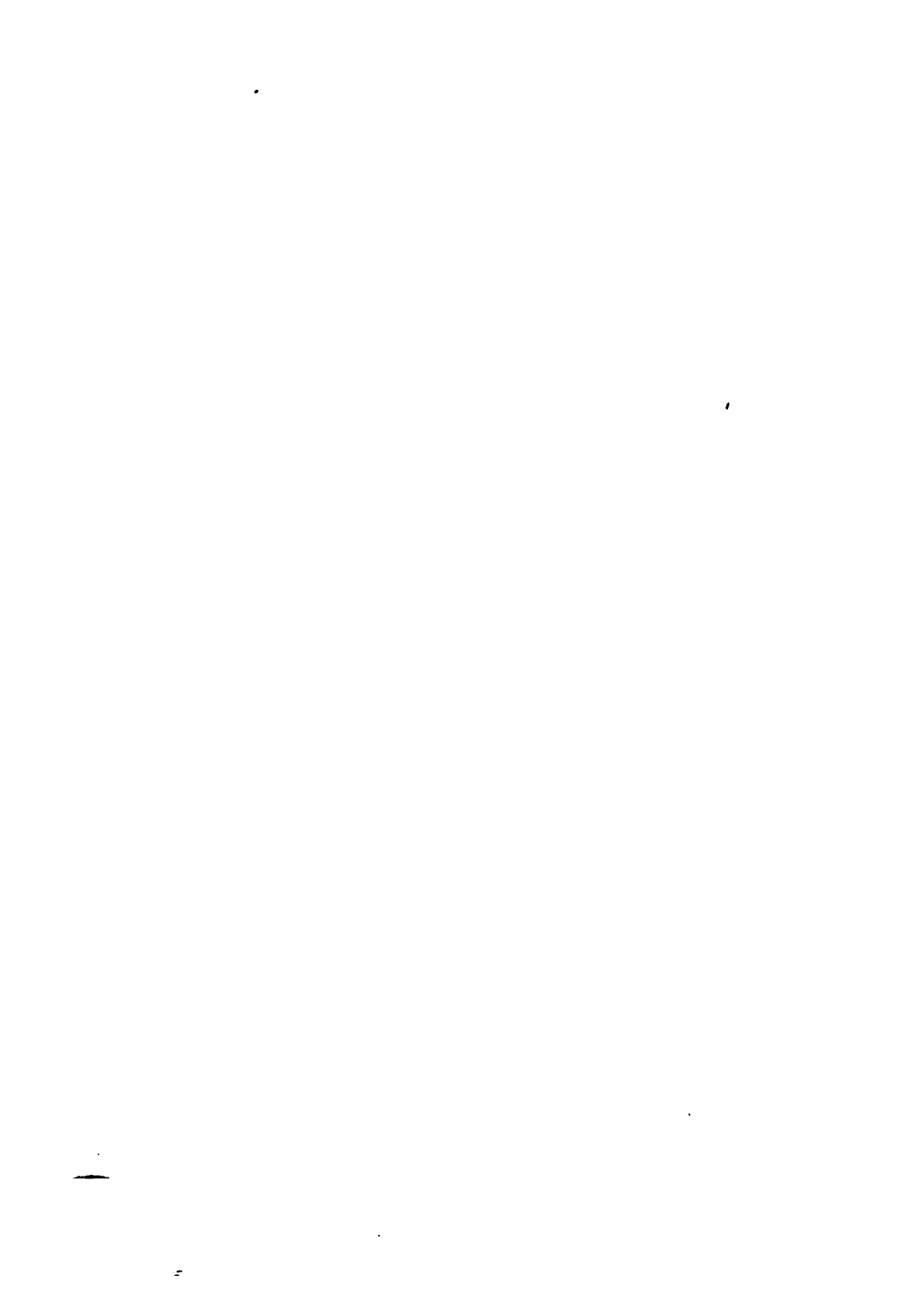
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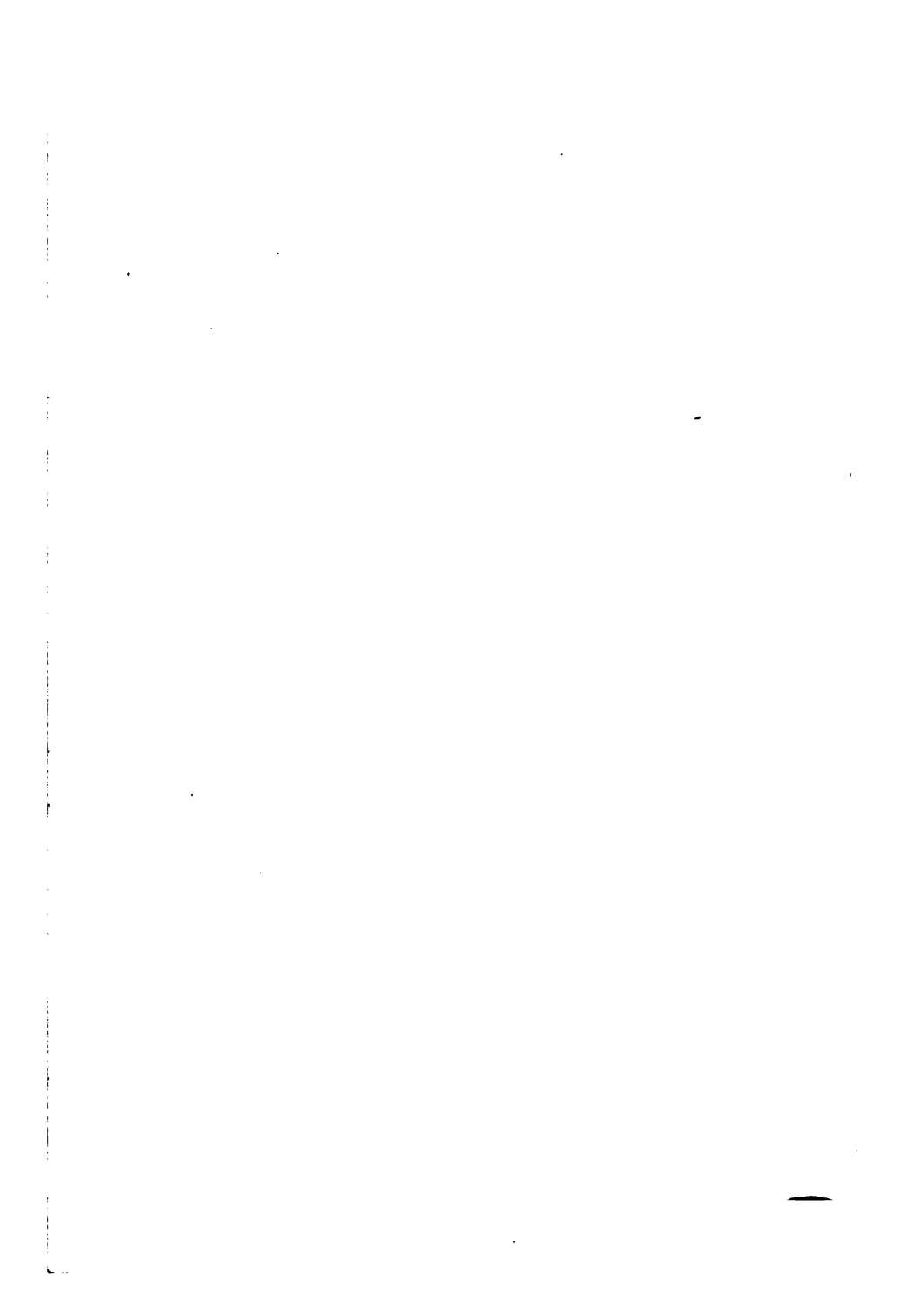
ing and Inspector Johnny Calder, Captain Silas Mitchell, and Officer Cline came ashore, wearing the smile that does not lightly rub off.

THE END

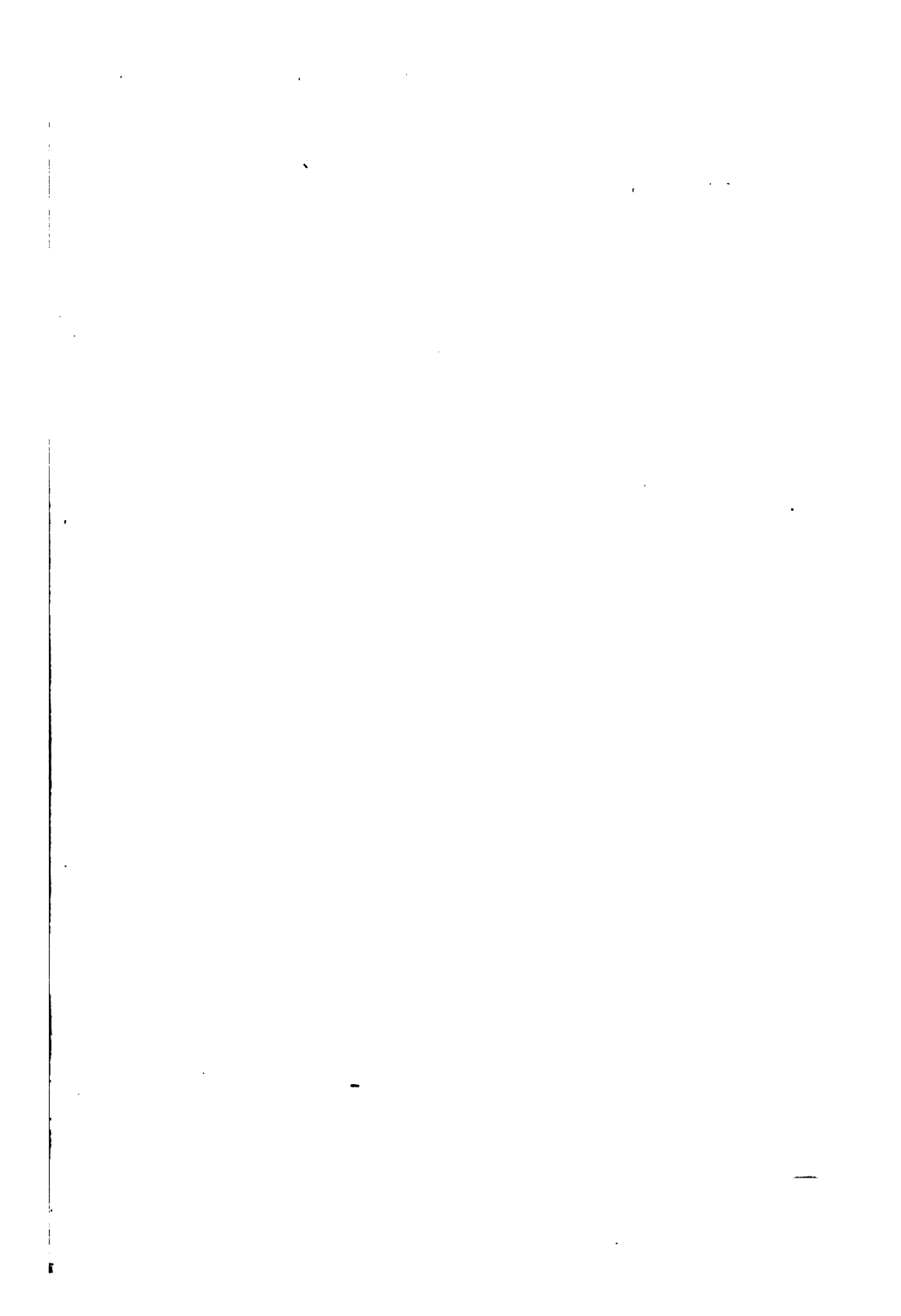
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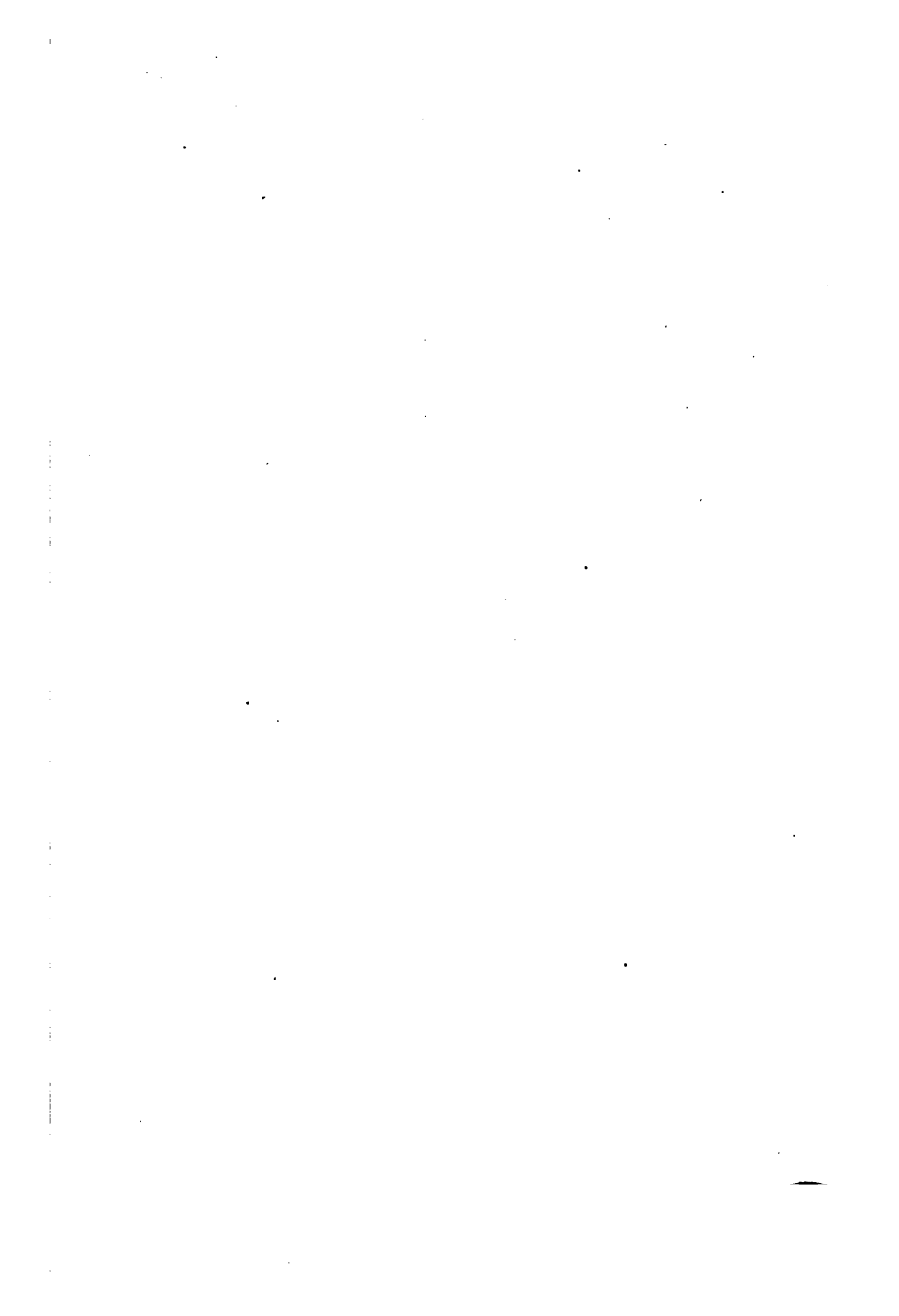












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